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ANNALS OF A CLERICAL FAMILY

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ANNALS OF A CLERICAL FAMILY

BEING SOME ACCOUNT OF THE FAMILY
AND DESCENDANTS OF WILLIAM
VENN, VICAR OF OTTERTON,
DEVON, 1600-1621

BY

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IN PIOUS MEMORY
OF
DEVOUT AND WORTHY ANCESTORS
THESE PAGES
HAVE BEEN GRATEFULLY
COMPILED

"A good life hath but few days, but a good name endureth for ever."

J. V.

H. V.

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PREFACE

THE following short volume belongs to a class of publication which is sufficiently familiar to need neither apology nor explanation. It does not profess to appeal to many outside the circles of those connected by ties of consanguinity with the various persons mentioned, or of the few who, for biographical or other purposes, have occasion to consult family pedigrees.

The recovery of the facts here recorded was largely due to my grandfather, John Venn, who was somewhat of an antiquary, and who carefully collected family reminiscences and traditions whilst they were yet in being. My father was keenly interested in the same inquiries, but his busy life left him few opportunities for indulging a taste in this direction. The greater part, therefore, of the following account is the result of my own investigations; deferred unfortunately until nearly all who belonged to the generations behind me were no longer present to assist.

Only two persons here recorded really emerge into public history. Owing to the interest which naturally attaches to John Ashton's short life, and the general

ignorance as to his family history, I have given a fuller account of his career than would otherwise have been necessary. As to the regicide, John Venn (who, as will be seen, was not certainly a relative of the Devonshire families), most of the facts concerning his private history, here reproduced, were first recorded by myself in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

J. VENN.

CAMBRIDGE, *Jan.* 27, 1903.

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THE COUNTRY AROUND PECKHAM



VENN FAMILY : ORIGIN AND EARLY HISTORY

THERE can be little or no doubt that our family name belongs to the class of *Place-names*, that is, that it originally indicated the district—the fen district—from which those who first obtained this surname sprang. This opinion, it ought hardly to need stating, is not the result of guess-work, but rests on the examination of contemporary records, in which the process of change can be observed.

As the result of considerable search amongst lists of proper names in all the customary sources for such information, including early deeds, suits at law, calendars of wills, parish registers, etc., it may be stated with some confidence that, in early times, the name, in any of its variants, is almost confined to two districts of England, viz., to the neighbourhood of the two great fen regions which lie respectively in the east and west of our country. Thus in Norfolk and Suffolk on the one hand, and in Devon and Somerset on the other, the forms “atte Fenne” and “de la Fenne” are common during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. For instance, William de Fenne was a juror in the hundred of Crediton, Devon, in 1274; Hugo atte Fen was a burgess for Yarmouth in the Parliament of 1394; John atte Fenne appears in an Assize Roll for 1395, as a landowner at Bishop’s Lydeard near Taunton, Somerset. Many other similar instances might be added from the early records of these counties.

In course of time the localising particles came gradually to be dropped, and the name assumed the mono-

syllabic form common in England, this abbreviation being almost completely effected early in the sixteenth century. But here a distinction in the spelling must be noticed, which gradually became fixed, and which depends on a difference of pronunciation¹ prevalent in different parts of England. When the name first began to be written down it was uniformly spelt with the letter *F*, and in the eastern counties this spelling was permanently retained. But in the south and west a softer pronunciation prevailed, and the spelling seems gradually to have been modified into accordance with the sound, by the substitution of the letter *V*. This change was almost completely effected in the latter part of the sixteenth century. After this period "Fenn" is hardly ever to be found in the west except as an occasional *alias*, and then only in deeds and similar documents where the traditional usage is apt to be retained.

With regard to these two distinct forms of the name, it is the western or softer form with which alone we are concerned. With a single exception, to be presently noticed, it does not appear that any of the "Venns" in the west of England had any tie of consanguinity with "Fenns" in the east. Though not widely spread, the name is of frequent occurrence within a certain area. It is to be found in many scattered villages, nearly all of which, however, lie not far from the great fen district of Somerset. These villages may be separated into two main groups, the families (of the name) belonging to one of these groups being almost certainly independent of those belonging to the other, though probably several in each group have sprung from a common stock. The villages which constitute one of these groups are scattered on the right bank of the Severn, in the close neighbourhood of Gloucester, and about Wotton under Edge. There are many wills of people of the name of Venn to be found in the Probate Registry of Gloucester, who lived in this district in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

¹ The softer form is known to philologists as the southern, in contrast with the northern dialectal form. Devon and Somerset lie well within the former. Gloucestershire is near the border-line of the two, and, as we shall see, the change of spelling is by no means so uniform there.

Of one of the families in this locality I have given some account in the Appendix.

The villages which constitute the other group in question lie in the west of Somerset and the east of Devon, nearly all of them being included within a radius of ten or twelve miles. Commencing with the date at which parish registers and wills become generally available, viz. from about 1550 onwards, there appear to be three principal families of the name in this district. Two of these are found in Somerset, viz. at Lydeard St. Lawrence and at Cheddar; the third in Devon, in the adjacent parishes of Broadhembury and Peyhembury.¹

The family at Lydeard St. Lawrence was one of very ancient yeoman stock which gradually rose to rank amongst the gentry. I have given some account of them at the end of this volume, and will therefore merely state here that, being landowners, they can be traced back without difficulty for several centuries. The earliest pedigree I have seen—it can be deduced from an Assize Roll of 1396—assigns three previous generations, and must therefore date from about the beginning of the fourteenth century. This family seems to have remained continuously in Lydeard St. Lawrence, or the adjacent parish of Bishop's Lydeard, till some way into the eighteenth century, but to have died out by the end of that century. One or two members of this stock achieved some distinction. Far the best known of these is the regicide, John Venn, M.P. for London in the Long Parliament. His son Thomas, Mayor of Bridgewater, became known by his treatise on Military Discipline; and his cousin, John, was Master of Balliol and Vice-Chancellor of Oxford. The earliest references to the ancestors of these men always describe them as "atte Fenn," or "de la Fenne," but this form gradually gave way to the later one. Neither the regicide nor his father Simon seem to have been known otherwise than as Venn or Ven, except at the Heralds' College, where their pedigree is

¹ Peyhembury is a large and straggling parish, and some of the hamlets in it lie much farther from their own church than from that of Broadhembury. It is probable that many who, by the register, seem to belong to the latter, actually lived within the former. This is certainly the case with the Venns who resided in the hamlet of Beer.

entered in 1633, and which, naturally taking an archaic view, terms them "*Ven alias Fen.*"

The family at Cheddar can be traced back to 1588, when John Venn of that place made his will. But he was then an elderly man, and his references to his farm, etc., suggest that he had lived there a considerable time. His successors continued to reside there as substantial yeomen until the property was parted with by the grandfather of the present A. J. Venn, M.D., of London.

As regards the two principal Devonshire families—if they are two—viz. those of Peyhembury and Broadhembury, the early wills at the Exeter Registry are unfortunately lost, and we are therefore mainly dependent upon the parish registers. Both of these registers were till lately in excellent preservation. That of Broadhembury is so still, and is unusually early and complete, commencing in 1538, and continuing throughout even the Commonwealth with scarcely any break. That of Peyhembury commences in 1558 and was nearly as complete, until some years ago, when the pages containing the entries during almost a century disappeared.¹ From these registers, from early deeds, and from wills, it appears that there was a John Venn² at Broadhembury, and an Osmund Venn at Peyhembury, in the middle of the sixteenth century. Both were yeomen or farmers in fairly substantial condition, and the posterity of both can be traced (as regards the main lines) with certainty to the present day. What relation they were to each other is not certain; but from the evidence of the dates, the way in which they appear as witnesses to each other's deeds or wills, and a certain amount of negative proof to be presently given, I have little doubt that they were brothers.

That they were relations is practically certain. Peyhembury and Broadhembury are adjacent parishes, and it would be a very curious coincidence if a name almost

¹ It seems to have been perfect in 1824 when Mr. Dicken, master of Blundell's school at Tiverton, consulted it and made extracts. Mr. Dicken was a relative by marriage of the Peyhembury Venns.

² The earliest reference to the former is his marriage, June 11, 1553; the earliest reference to the latter, the baptism of his son Henry, February 18, 1559.

unknown till then in Devon should have originated independently in them both. The evidence on this head is fairly clear. Earlier than the date of any parish register we have, as our main resource for localising families of other than the first rank, the *Subsidy Rolls*. These rolls are numerous, frequent, and in good preservation. A large number of them have been consulted at the Record Office, with the following results. In the Roll of 34 and 35 Henry VIII., namely in 1544, the name does not occur in Peyhembury or Broadhembury, or in their neighbourhood. Nor is it to be found there in any earlier roll so far as I have been able to ascertain. But in later rolls, as for instance in those of 1570 and 1580, it regularly occurs in these parishes and in one or two of those which lie around. Of course such evidence is not absolutely conclusive, but when many of these rolls are examined, especially those which embrace a large area, they afford very strong evidence as to whether persons of any given name were or were not residing in the districts referred to. Some of these rolls are almost equivalent to a modern directory in their range and completeness. Thus in 1580 there is one which includes 161 parishes, and contains some 4300 names of inhabitants, heads of households, who were resident in the eastern and southern part of Devon. When it is stated that thirty-five names are given for Broadhembury, and thirty-seven for Peyhembury, it will be understood how searching a test is thus¹ afforded as to the prevalence of any particular name. In this roll the name Venn (or Fenn) occurs only four times, always in the immediate vicinity referred to. This seems to me almost absolute proof that those of the name had only recently come into this part of the country. When to this we add the fact, shown by similar evidence, that during all this time—say from 1524 onwards—the name is never absent from Lydeard in Somerset, which lies only about twelve miles off to the north, the presumption becomes strong that the families spread from this centre into Devon.

¹ It is strange that this remarkable roll has not been printed by any Devonshire antiquarian society. It would be of the greatest value to any one who was in doubt as to the parish registers to be consulted for any family search.

To this must be added two other pieces of evidence which may be taken for what they are worth: namely, tradition, and the use of particular armorial bearings. The traditions prevalent amongst yeoman families in remote country districts cannot be altogether neglected, and nearly a century ago it was certainly the belief of the Peyhembury Venns that they originally "came out of Somerset," though they had apparently no idea from what exact locality.

As to the use of arms, I have fully discussed the question in a separate section, so that a few words will suffice here. It will, of course, be understood that we are not concerned here with the technical right to use a particular coat-of-arms, but simply with the evidence that the practice of using such a coat may afford as to family affinity. John Venn, my grandfather, who was keenly interested from boyhood in matters of heraldry, says that the arms which his father and grandfather always used were "Argent, on a fess azure three escallops of the first within a bordure engrailed of the second." I have an old seal thus engraved, which was certainly used by Henry Venn on his letters from 1756; and there is no reason to doubt that the statement is equally correct as to his father Richard Venn. This carries us back to, say, 1720. Again, the Peyhembury family used exactly the same design on their seals from a period certainly some way back in the eighteenth century.¹ Now these are the arms used by the Venns of Lydeard, and in particular by John Venn, the regicide, as we know from the fact that they are engraved on several tombstones over members of the family who were buried at Lydeard in the seventeenth century. How did Richard Venn, the London clergyman, and his namesakes the Devonshire yeomen, come to hit upon the same armorial bearings, or even to use such ensigns at all? The former never displayed the faintest interest in any question of family history, and used even to declare that he did not know that he had a single

¹ The Rev. E. Coleridge, vicar of Ottery St. Mary, in a letter written in 1814, says, "I was shown yesterday, by Mr. John Venn of Peyhembury, the family arms painted and enclosed in a small frame; besides he possessed an old silver seal handed down from father to son."

living relation. Moreover, with his strong High Church convictions, he would have been one of the last men to wish to claim affinity with the detested regicide. Nor is the difficulty less as regards the yeomen at Peyhembury, who do not seem to have been at all the kind of men to make a push in the world of fashion.

In the present day such a question would offer no difficulty, for there are the "heraldic stationers" scattered abroad, each with a dictionary of armorial bearings at his elbow, ready to describe the coat to which every man is entitled. But one hundred and eighty years ago things were different. The London clergyman and the Devonshire yeomen were ignorant of each other's existence, had no money to spare for such pursuits as family history and arms, in which they had no interest, and it is really difficult to see how they should have hit upon the same device, unless those before them had been accustomed to use it or to regard it as what they were entitled to use. If, on the other hand, they were both descended from the family at Lydeard, there is nothing remarkable in their continuing to use a device on their seals, etc., which men in their position and of their time could scarcely have hit upon independently. This seems to me therefore to be evidence decidedly confirmatory of the common derivation from Lydeard.

It has been already stated that the name Venn was for long almost entirely confined to the west of England. One small exception must be made to this statement, which is worth notice on account of the evidence which it affords as to the etymology of the name. "Venns" occur, as yeomen and farmers, for some period after the middle of the sixteenth century, in one district of Sussex, namely, in Cuckfield and its neighbourhood. Several of their wills are to be found in the registry at Chichester. The evidence afforded by these wills, and by several Chancery suits, points to the same conclusion as we drew in reference to the persons and places of the west. In 1565 the name appears as A'Fen and A'Fenne; in 1573 as A'Ven; but at subsequent dates always as Venn or Venne. Presumably the progenitors of these yeomen had migrated from the marsh lands which lie in the south-east of Sussex.

We may sum up by saying that, towards the middle and latter part of the sixteenth century, there were two groups of families, whose name, though still occasionally rendered "Fenn," had already generally assumed the form "Venn": one scattered through various villages on the borders of Somerset and Devon, and the other in the south-west of Gloucestershire. Outside these areas the name is scarcely to be found. These two groups may be assumed to be entirely distinct, that is, to have originated independently as descriptive names. The whole Somerset and Devon group may be, and much of it almost certainly must be, of common origin, for nearly all the villages through which it is found to prevail would be included by a radius of ten or twelve miles drawn from a point on the Somerset and Devon border. The likeliest place of origin for this family, if it be of single origin, is Lydeard near Taunton. Here the Venns were already established as a family of yeomen or small gentry by about the year 1300; and here they remained till they gradually died out in the eighteenth century.

Though, as already stated, the personal name was almost certainly originally derived from that of a place or district, the converse process, by which places come to be named after persons, probably prevailed in later times. This is the case, I apprehend, with some of the many farms, small holdings, or houses, bearing the name of Venn, which are to be found in the western counties. There can be little doubt that some of these places came to be so called because they had been held or tilled by men of that name. This is a well-known explanation of many of the later place-names in England.¹ Thus, in one Ordnance Sheet alone (viz. No. XXI., which includes portions of East Devon and West Somerset), besides two or three "Venny's" and "Vans," the following six instances are found: "Ven farm," a mile or two south of Lydeard; "Ven," by Brompton Regis, three miles N.E. of Dulverton; "Venn," two miles N. of Crediton; "Venn," a mile N. of Cul-lompton; "Venn Cross" (now a railway station), six

¹ One of the most familiar instances of this kind is afforded by "Parker's Piece" at Cambridge. It acquired the name because the ground was held by a man of that name at the time the ground was acquired by the town some two hundred years ago.

miles W. of Milverton ; and "Venman," two miles E. of Bampton. Some of these designations may, of course, be directly indicative of the "fen" character of the spots in question, and therefore be of very early origin ; but the situation of others renders this explanation unlikely. Moreover, it is a fact that in almost every one of these cases there were families of the name settled in the immediate neighbourhood in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

As unmistakable instances, on the other hand, of the name as descriptive of a place rather than as derivative from a person, may be mentioned Ven-Ottery and Ven House. The former, a hamlet a few miles from Ottery St. Mary, certainly means "Ottery in the fen," and is not unfrequently written Fen-Ottery.¹ Ven House, near Milborn Port, on the borders of Somerset and Dorset, is a fine old mansion which has been the home for many years of the Medlicott family. It does not appear that any of our name ever resided near by, and as the name of the manor is Ven or Fen, it seems probable that the designation is an ancient one and directly indicative of the nature of the locality.

"Ven farm," above referred to, may belong to either category. On the one hand, the situation is low and fenny ; but, on the other, people of the name had been resident landowners in the parish for so many centuries that it is quite possible for the name to have thus arisen. The name is fairly old, for in the Heralds' Visitation of 1623 "Thomas Kingston, of Venne, in the parish of Bishop's Lydiard," recorded his pedigree.

The family historian need not trouble himself with an account of places prior to the date at which his personal interest in them commences, but a few words of general description seem desirable. As to Broadhembury, it is in some respects a typically beautiful Devonshire village. It lies at the foot of the western slope of the long group of hills which stretch near the border-line of that county and Somerset. At the southern summit of these hills,

¹ As illustrating the dialectic difference already mentioned, Ven-Ottery may be contrasted with Fen-Ditton near Cambridge.

overlooking the village, is the ancient camp called Hembury Fort. This commands a splendid view over the broad valley of the Exe, with the cathedral in the distance, and far away on the horizon the blue outline of Dartmoor. The village was formerly under the lordship of Dunkeswell Abbey, which lay some five or six miles to the north-east, amongst the hills. At the suppression of the monasteries Dunkeswell was given to the Russells. The manor of Broadhembury was bought in the reign of Elizabeth by Edward Drewe, a well-known serjeant-at-law, and recorder of Exeter. He bought it in, or soon after, 1601, of Henry Wriothesley, third Lord Southampton, grandson of the original grantee. Edward Drewe's son Thomas, sheriff of Devon in 1612, built the present "Grange" in 1610, where his family have resided as lords of the manor ever since.¹ This house took the place of the old Grange, supposed to have been the ancient grange of the Abbey.² The drawing-room of the present building is lined throughout with magnificent oak carving taken from the former house, and said to have come originally from the Abbey. In the boldness of the cutting, and variety of the subjects, some of these being Scriptural, I have seldom seen any so remarkable.

The church is a very fair one; the tower really fine. In the latter part of the eighteenth century (1769-1778) the living was held by Augustus Toplady, author of the well-known hymn "Rock of Ages," to whom a memorial has recently been placed in the chancel. He died, and was buried, in London. As in so many other churches in this part of Devonshire, there was originally a fine carved rood-screen. During some restorations in the church a few years ago, this screen, being much decayed, was placed in a neighbouring barn, pending repair, where it was accidentally burnt. The font is curious, and of great antiquity.

Peyhembury lies in the same general situation, but lower down, and nearer Exeter, from which it is only

¹ At the present time (1902) the whole estate is under offer of sale, on the death of the late General Drewe, the last descendant, in the direct male line, of Edward Drewe.

² A little stream, the Tale, runs through the grounds, where it broadens out into what were once, in all likelihood, the monastic fish-ponds.



ST. ANDREW'S, BROADHEMBURY, 1900.

about ten or twelve miles distant. Like Broadhembury, it contains a small village clustered around the church, and a number of scattered hamlets, some of these lying on the fringe of the heather-covered moors. It is watered by the Tale, a tributary of the Otter. The church has been rebuilt, with the exception of the tower. The rood-screen is one of those fine carved ones so frequent in the churches of that district. The churchyard contains a grand old yew tree, and being raised commands a fine view of the hills. There are several monuments to the Venns in the church and churchyard, but none of these are of any antiquity.

Soon after their first appearance in the district, if we may judge by the entries in the parish registers, we find the Venns mentioned as tenants on one or other of the manors connected with these parishes. These manors are as follows :—

Broadhembury

(1) Two manors called respectively the “east part” and “west part.” These formerly belonged to the Abbey of Dunkeswell, and from 1601, as already stated, have been in the possession of the Drewe family. After several inquiries, I have not been able to ascertain whether the early Court Rolls of these manors are still in existence.

(2) A small manor which has belonged from very early times to the Dean and Chapter of Exeter. Many records belonging to this are preserved in their muniment room. A long search was made for me amongst these records by the Rev. H. E. Reynolds, formerly librarian to the chapter. The earliest family reference which he could find was to John Venn, as holding a tenement called “Watts” in 1592. This is doubtless the man to be presently mentioned.

(3) There is also a Court Leet, commonly called the Duchy Court, belonging to the Duchy of Lancaster. The rolls of this court, which extend far back into mediæval times, are preserved at the Record Office, amongst the records of the Duchy. They deal, however, little if at all with the holding of the property, being mainly concerned

with the entry of fines for small offences. The name of Venn could not be found amongst these.

Peyhembury

There are, or were, three manors connected with this parish, so far as I can ascertain.

(1) Upton Prudham, or Prydham. This seems to have been a very extensive manor, including not only Peyhembury, but parts of Broadhembury, Feniton, and other neighbouring parishes. A large part of the waste land or moor near Hembury Fort, and elsewhere on the hills around, was included in this. Pole, about 1600, says of this manor, "Margaret, one of the sisters and heires of Thomas Prodham, in the middle of the raigne of King Edward III. brought this land unto Nicholas Whitinge her husband, in which name it contynued divers discentes, and by the daughters of John Whitinge¹ it was transferred in the families of Walrond, Keynes, the heires of Robert Fitzjames, and Ashford; and now Henry Ashford hath the whole." This property, or rather so much of it as lies in Peyhembury, the Venns gradually purchased, the last acquisition dating from 1714. Whether the Court Rolls of this manor are now in existence is not known; but amongst the earliest deeds in possession of the Peyhembury family are several official extracts from them made by the steward. The first of these is dated April 7, 1600, when Roger and Elizabeth Ashford were lords of half the manor. John Venn then appeared before the court, and was admitted tenant with his son Henry, of 27 acres lately held by Ellinor Venn (his mother). Another is dated September 3, 1613, Walter Smyth being lord of a quarter of the manor. Henry Ven, *alias* Fen, son of John deceased, then appeared, and an arrangement as to a holding was made between him and his brother John. These transactions refer respectively to the persons whom I have called the Venns of Peyhembury and Broadhem-

¹ The fact that it passed through the four daughters of John Whiting doubtless accounts for the subsequent references to the lords of medieties and quarters of the manor.

bury, who will be found near the head of the pedigrees given later on.

(2) The manor of Cokesputt. I can find little or nothing as to the history or records of this. The lord was formerly Sir John Kennaway. It was sold, some forty or fifty years ago, to Mr. William Warren, in whose family it now remains.

(3) The manor of Pole. About this I can find nothing.

VENNS OF BROADHEMBURY

THE earliest of the Broadhembury family who can be traced is John Venn. He is described as a "husbandman," *i.e.* he was in all likelihood a tenant-farmer rather than a yeoman; and I strongly suspect, though direct evidence is not forthcoming, that he was a brother of the Osmund who heads the Peyhembury pedigree. The parish register, as already stated, starts from 1538; and on the 11th day of June 1553 John de Ven¹ and Agnes (no name mentioned) were married. In the following year the first child was born. His family consisted of four sons, John, Thomas, Henry, and William, and two daughters, Alice and Weniffred. Whatever his position may have been, he must have had sufficient means to enable his youngest son to enter Oxford. He died in 1594-5, being buried at Broadhembury in February of that year. His will is entered in the Calendar as having been proved at Exeter, but, like many of the early wills at that registry, it was lost long ago. The elder sons of John Venn—at least John and Henry—seem to have remained in their native parish, and to have followed their father's employment. They died in 1630 and 1637 respectively, and are both described in their wills as "husbandmen." Judging by the legacies which they left, and by the inventory of John, they must both have been in fairly good circumstances for their position.

¹ This, by the way, is a very late date for the use of the particle, which never recurs in the register.

WILLIAM VENN, VICAR OF OTTERTON

WILLIAM VENN, the youngest son of John, was baptized at Broadhembury, February 8, 1568-9. He matriculated at Oxford,—naturally as a Devonian of that date, from Exeter College,—March 11, 1591-2. The entry is simply, “Gulielmus Fenne, Devon., Pleb. fil. ætat 22.” The expression “plebei filius” was common in those days,¹ when gradations of rank were strictly preserved and marked, as applied to the sons of the poor. Many sons of clergymen are so described, amongst these William’s son Richard; and students so designated paid lower fees. William’s age is apparently understated by a year, for according to the parish register he must have been just 23. In any case he came to College unusually late, for the ordinary age at admission in those days was 16. It looks, therefore, as if his entering the clerical profession was somewhat of an afterthought. He graduated B.A., February 28, 1594-5, shortly before his father’s death; and there seems no evidence of his having proceeded to M.A., or having visited Oxford again. He was ordained deacon and priest by Gervase Babington, Bishop of Exeter, October 15, 1595. As illustrating what has been already said, as to the uncertainty of spelling the family name at this period, it may be remarked that whereas he was matriculated as Fenne, and was admitted at Exeter College as Fen, he was instituted to his vicarage as Venne, and is always styled Venn or Ven in the parish register.

He was instituted to Otterton, by Bishop Babington,

¹ It corresponds to the “mediocris fortunæ” common in some of the Cambridge College admission registers.

March 21, 1599-1600, Richard Duke¹ of Otterton, being the patron of the living. Here he remained until his death in 1621.

The only known facts about his clerical career at Otterton are that he was appointed rural dean of Aylesbeare, in his own district, September 30, 1616; and that in the following year he had a dispute about tithes, as most parish clergy probably did in old days, when tithes had to be collected in small amounts from many farmers and labourers. His opponent, George Cook, not making his final appearance before the Consistorial Court, was duly excommunicated, November 28, 1617.

He married in or about the year 1600. His wife's Christian name was Mary. Three years after his death she married Richard Hake of Otterton, the marriage licence being dated October 29, 1624. She survived till 1645, as her son Richard refers to her as then living.

William died at Otterton, and was buried there, July 21, 1621. He seems to have left no will, but the administration of his goods was granted to his widow, August 24, 1621. The inventory has been preserved, and as it gives an interesting illustration of the property and position of a country parson of that date, it is worth reproducing. Most of the items in the list are what might be expected on the part of one in his position, though the total of £94 seems rather large for the vicar of a remote country parish. That the bulk of the property should consist of farm produce and stock is quite natural, for the parson would cultivate his own glebe; and where, as in this case, he was a farmer's son, and had probably worked in the fields during his early life, he would have no difficulty in doing so. Those who have looked at wills of this date are of course aware that luxuries and ornaments of every kind—ornamental furniture, pictures, carpets, clocks, etc.—are hardly ever to be found recorded except in the houses of the great and rich. On the other hand, £10 for the apparel, and the same sum for books, out of a total of £94, tell of

¹ It is probable that Mr. Duke was already acquainted with the family, as he owned property in Broadhembury parish.

WILLIAM VENN, VICAR OF OTTERTON 17

some culture and refinement. The remarkable item, however, is the military equipment, the "musket, sword and dagger, headpiece and bandoliers." He cannot have used them as a priest: may they not point to some earlier experiences in his life? In some Devonshire muster-rolls for 1594, when William was a student at Oxford, the name of John Venn (most likely his brother) occurs "for the service of her highness in Britaigne." Had William been called out two or three years earlier, this would account both for the possession of such warlike implements, and for his delay in entering the University.

William Venn had four sons, Richard, William, Arthur, and Robert. The eldest and youngest of these followed their father's career, as Oxford graduates and Devonshire clergymen. The two others have not been traced. Of his two daughters, Margaret and Eliza, the latter died in childhood.

INVENTORY OF WILLIAM VENN

One horse . . .	£12	0	0	dishes, 2 salts, 6			
Three kine, one calf,				sawcers, 4 candle-			
13 ewes . . .	3	0	0	sticks, 1 dozen			
Three lambs, 9 pigges	2	10	0	spoons . . .	£1	5	0
Four acres of wheat,				One dozen earthen			
3 acres of barley,				dishes . . .	0	2	0
3 acres of oats . . .	14	10	0	One carpet, 4 broad			
Apparell . . .	10	0	0	cloathes, 8 table			
Books . . .	10	0	0	napkins . . .	1	4	0
Two fether beds with				One cupboard . . .	0	16	0
their furniture, 3				Haye . . .	2	0	0
daft (?) beds . . .	12	0	0	Two table boards, 2			
Seven gallons butter,				sideboards, 2 formes,			
23 cheeses . . .	1	18	0	4 chairs, 4 framed			
Wolle . . .	2	10	0	stooles . . .	2	2	0
Three great chests,				Two hogsheads, one			
and three little . . .	1	6	8	of them full of			
Four brasse pots . . .	2	0	0	cyder, 6 little bar-			
Five brasse pans, 2				rels, 4 vats, 4 little			
cauldrons, 2 spil-				tubs . . .	2	6	8
lets, 2 frying pans,				Wood and furse . . .	5	0	0
1 brewing kettle . . .	0	16	0	Two spits, two and-			
Eighteen pewter				irons, 2 pair of			

pot-hooks, a brand					Musket, sword and			
iron, a griddle, and					dagger, headpiece			
pot-hanger . . .	£0	7	0		and bandoliers . .	£1	10	0
Five pailles and brackets	0	3	4		Pultry	0	10	0
One pair of harrows,					Two old boards, a			
1 shovel, 1 mat-					seate, 2 shelves,			
tocke, 5 corn pikes	0	16	0		and other imple-			
One saddle, Crooke's					ments forgotten . .	0	13	4
Hackney saddle, 2								
pairs of panniers . .	0	13	4		Sum-total	94	4	8
Dung	0	13	4		Debts that I owe .	36	0	0

Signum ¹ **IW** John Ven de Peyhembury.

Signum **+O** Johannes Ven de Broadhembury.

Exhibited August 24, 1621.

As our family was so closely connected with Otterton for more than one generation, some account of the village may be conveniently given here. The following is Tristram Risdon's description in his *Survey*, written about 1630, whilst Richard Venn was vicar :—

Otterton coasteth the cliffs near where the river Otter emptieth its waters into the sea at Ottermouth, which is a goodly manor, and from the Conquest unto the dissolution of abbies continued in the hands of religious men ; at which time, as it is recorded, it did contain five hides. It was first belonging unto St. Michael's de Monk (sic) in Normandy ;² and after these lands were taken from the Normans by act of Parliament in King Henry the fourth's time, the abbot of Sion enjoyed this manor by the gift of King Henry the sixth. This, as it is supposed, served as a cell to the Abbey of St. Michael's de Monk, unto which it was given by the name of Otterton, whereunto was allotted the manor of Yartcombe for the maintenance thereof.

Upon the surrender, Richard Duke, a clerk in the Augmenta-

¹ Such signs must not be taken as indicative of inability to write. This particular device seems to have been commonly adopted by John Venn of Peyhembury. It occurs in a deed of 1618, still in possession of the family, in which he signs his name thus,—“**IW** Johes ffen als Venn.”

² It was at first a cell of the great Abbey of Mont St. Michel in Normandy (St. Michael in Periculo Maris), as was also the Cornish Abbey of St. Michael's Mount. It was a small house, supporting at most four monks. At the suppression of the Alien Monasteries its revenues were handed over to Sion House. At the General Surrender, as stated above, it was purchased by Mr. Duke. It seems doubtful if any trace is now left of the old monastic buildings.

As an indication of the former character of the place it may be mentioned that the prior had a right to the pre-emption of fish in all his ports,—this included Ottermouth and Sidmouth ; he claimed also “every porpoise caught in the fisheries, and half of the dolphins” (Oliver, *Monasticon*).



OTTERTON, 1902.

tion Court, procured this manor, and built a fair house upon the rising over the river ; who had issue one only daughter, married unto George Brooke, brother unto the Lord Cobham, and left great possession to descend unto her, but conveyed this manor unto Richard Duke, his brother's son, [who married] daughter of Sir Arthur Basset, knight ; his son, the daughter of Reynell ; his grandson, the daughter of Southcott.

Robert Poer granted unto the church of St. Michael that hill and commons in Otterton, concerning which there was great variance between his ancestors and the great church.

In earlier times the flat valley of the Otter was an estuary of the sea, somewhat like that of the Exe but on a smaller scale, averaging perhaps about a quarter of a mile in width ; and the sea at high tide must have washed the base of the hill on which the church stands. Leland, who visited it somewhere about the time of the Surrender, calls Otterton "a pretty fisher-town," and thus describes its situation :—

"It standeth on the Est side of the Haven about a mile from Ottermouth. And on the West side of the Haven is Budeleigh, right almost against Otterton ; but it is somewhat more from the shore than Otterton. Lesse than an Hundrith yeres sinse shippes used this Haven, but it is now clene barrid" (Hearne's edition of the *Itinerary*, iii. 57).

It is no fisher-town now, the river bed having almost entirely silted up as far as its mouth, by Budleigh Salterton, some three miles below Otterton. A great bar of shingle faces the sea, leaving a narrow exit for the river at the east side of the valley, and a gull-haunted swamp behind at low tide. At one time the swamps here must have been employed, as was often the case in such situations in early days, for the manufacture of salt, an indication of which is still to be found in the name of the little watering-place of Salterton, at the mouth of the river, in the parish of East Budleigh.

Otterton is a very picturesque village, with one rather broad road through it—that which runs up and down the hills from Sidmouth towards Exeter—lined by a small stream, walled in as a conduit and crossed by little bridges which give access to some of the cottages. The church,

dedicated to St. Michael, stands in a fine situation, on a hill rising over the former estuary, with the red and rocky banks below, which once faced the sea as cliffs. The body of the church has been entirely rebuilt, in 1870, but the tower of red sandstone has been left almost unaltered. The only visible signs of antiquity inside are the font and a number of monuments to the Duke family.

Sir William Pole, in his *Collections*, written about the same time as Risdon's work, says of the first Mr. Duke, "Hee builded a fayre howse in this place uppon an ascent over the river Otter, which driveth his mylles underneath the house." That house still stands there, apparently untouched since the days of the builder and his successors, the patrons and friends of William and Richard Venn. It may be due to its position—in the midst of the village and almost in contact with the church—which has precluded it from being a suitable residence for a modern squire, that it seems never to have been added to or altered in any way. The arms of Duke, quartering Poer, are carved over the entrance door. Till lately it was used as a parish school, but is now occupied by one or two poor families. It ceased to be a residence of the Dukes at the death of the last male representative of that family. The property now belongs to the Rolles.

Mr. Duke's "mylles" are at work to this day, driven by a water-course diverted from the Otter a little way above the village.

The churchyard rises slightly behind the church, and is bordered by a fine row of nine old yew trees. Close by is the parsonage house. Around, at a little distance, is a circle of hills, most of which are well wooded, and some are crowned with heather and furze. The village lies so sheltered in its valley, and the surrounding trees are so well developed, that it is difficult, as one stands there, to realise that the sea is within a mile of the church. And yet the parish is a maritime one, with two or three miles of sea-coast. A walk of a quarter of an hour up the hill-side, which rises on the south side of the village, brings one to a point which commands a fine view of the Channel beneath.

In another respect there is an absence of seaside characteristics. Those who have ever consulted the parish registers of the exposed districts on our eastern coast will have been struck by the terrible frequency with which the burial of drowned seamen is recorded. There are small parishes on the Norfolk coast where at times most of the burials are due to this cause—the loss of a single man-of-war amongst those treacherous sands would sometimes strew the shore for many miles with corpses. But neither at Otterton, nor at the adjacent village of Budleigh, could I observe a single such instance. One can only conclude that their position in the hollow of a deep bay, and the absence of any such gathering place as Yarmouth roads, had as a rule prevented most ships from approaching the coast. There was but little opening for the “wrecker” there in early days.

RICHARD VENN OF OTTERTON

RICHARD VENN was baptized at Otterton, May 17, 1601. He matriculated at Oxford, from Exeter College, April 16, 1619, being described in the register, like his father, as "plebei filius." He graduated B.A., May 10, 1621, and seems also to have proceeded to the M.A., as he is distinctly so described in the Bishop's Act Book.¹ The degree, indeed, is not recorded in the University records, but these, like those at Cambridge, are notoriously imperfect in early times. He was instituted to the vicarage of Otterton by Bishop Valentine Carey, December 6, 1625, on the presentation of Richard Duke, Esq., who had formerly presented his father to the same living. The vacancy on this occasion was caused by the resignation of Isaiah Farrington, B.D., former Fellow of Exeter College, who was an elderly man and had probably been appointed merely for the purpose of holding the living until his successor was qualified. Richard Venn remained here until the troubles commenced, namely, until the year 1645.

Richard Venn was a staunch "Church and King" man, and accordingly suffered for his opinions. There is a very full account of his experiences in Walker's *Sufferings of the Clergy*, who tells us as follows :—

The sufferings of this worthy old gentleman were, as I have often heard,² very great, and well deserved to have been made known to more generations than that wicked one which brought them upon him and were eye-witnesses of them. And indeed he

¹ He also claims the same degree in his signature to his brother Robert's *Testamur* in 1661, when he writes "Rich. fenne, utriusq. artium Mr."

² It must be remembered that Walker was a Devonshire man and held a living in Exeter, so that the names of the dispossessed clergy in his neighbourhood must have been familiar to him.

had taken care to transmit them to posterity, as far as a manuscript of his own drawing up might contribute to that end. But that being unhappily lost, the reader must content himself with this imperfect account of his troubles, which were wholly occasioned by an unpardonable crime of loyalty; and which, as must be confessed, none was more guilty of than himself. Notice of this being given to the Lord Fairfax when he had his quarters at Tiverton,¹ that General sent a troop of horse to bring Mr. Venn before him, who were so severe in executing their orders that they took him as they found him, not permitting him to put on warmer clothes; and carried him away with them on a wet and cold day, it being but two days before Christmas day. When he was come they made a fire to warm him, but having rid so long and so thinly clad in the cold he fainted away. The next day he was brought before the General, who told him what things had been alleged against him, and particularly that he read Mass in his house, meaning the Common Prayer; and charged him with some instances of loyalty. The truth of which, I suppose, the old gentleman could not deny.

After this he was carried about a prisoner with the army; but at length obtained his liberty, I mean for some time, for soon after his return to Otterton his troubles were renewed,² and he was carried, if I mistake not, before the Committee of Exeter, and then, as I take it, or some other time, he was kept a prisoner from October 30, 1646, to the 3rd of September following, which was near eleven months. During which time he was ill used, and lay for some part of it at least on the bare boards.

The prosecution was plainly malicious, and the accusation brought against him before the Committee consisted chiefly of matters which had passed some years before, relating to his loyalty, and disaffection to the Parliament. Some at least of the witnesses who came in against him were vile and profligate fellows, nor did their depositions agree together. And what is more observable, these very fellows could not but give an attestation to his worth and honesty, and more particularly to his diligence in the discharge of his ministerial function. Notwith-

¹ Fairfax appears to have come into Devonshire about October 14, 1645. Tiverton was stormed by him, October 19. He continued in that part of England until about April 1646; his headquarters from November 15 to December 2 being at Ottery St. Mary, close to Otterton. He was again at Tiverton from December 6, 1645, to Jan. 8, 1646 (*v. Rushworth, Hist. Collections*, vi. p. 95; Sprigg, *Anglia Rediviva*, p. 157).

² The actual date of his ejection seems to have been in May 1646, or a little before, to judge from the following order by the Committee for Plundered Ministers, "June 2, 1648. By virtue of an order of both houses of Parliament of the 2nd May 1646, it is ordered that the yearlie rent of £40 reserved and payable to the deane and chapter of Exeter, out of the manor of Salcombe in the countie of Devon, be paid to and for increase of the maintenance of Richard Conant, minister of the parish church of Otterton in the said countie, the vicarage whereof is not worth £50 a yeare." The sequestrators were thereupon required to pay the same. (Bodleian MS. No. 325, p. 66.)

standing which, the Committee proceeded to sequester him,¹ and ordered a troop of horse to give Mr. Conant, whom they had appointed to succeed him, induction to and possession of his living. This order they faithfully executed, entering by violence, and, Mr. Venn having withdrawn himself, turning his wife and eleven children out of doors ;² and at the same or some other time plundering him of every farthing that he had in the world.

Whilst they were thus dispossessing this miserable family who knew not whither to go nor wherewithal to subsist themselves, one of the children, a poor little harmless infant,³ gazing at the pinkt hose of one of the troopers, very innocently went to handle and play with them. At which the barbarous wretch, with equal violence and malice, struck the child off from him, with such a blow as was very likely to have done no small injury to it. How this poor infant and some other of the children were afterwards supported I cannot learn. But this I am informed, they lived in a poor, mean, and miserable condition, and that one of them was taken and kept by an old servant of Mr. Venn's, another was bound apprentice to a chandler, and a third was maintained and kept at school by an honest farmer, whom he ever after to his dying day called his father.

I must here add another particular of Mr. Venn's sufferings, though I cannot say whether it was precedent or subsequent to his sequestration ; and it is this : that he was once seized, as I conceive by a party of the Parliament soldiers who were going to execute him ; but one of the king's parties, coming up in the very instant of time, put a stop to the commission of that barbarous outrage.

Mr. Venn, being thus dispossessed of his living, wandered to find where he could get a place, which after some time he did, near Liskard in Cornwall. But he was hunted thence also. After which he got another little place in this county called Blackawton, which he was as little permitted to enjoy as he had been to keep that in Cornwall. How he made a shift to subsist himself afterwards⁴ I cannot learn. This only I am sure of, that he was not actually starved (which is the more to be wondered at because he had no fifths paid him), but lived to repossess his

¹ The minutes of these Parliamentary Committees were carefully kept, but a number of them seem to have been lost, and I have not succeeded in finding any reference to Richard Venn except the above indirect one. Those which I have been able to consult are (1) at the Record Office, amongst the Commonwealth State Papers ; (2) at the British Museum (Add. MSS. 15669-15671) ; (3) some volumes amongst the Walker MSS., at the Bodleian Library.

² There is a mistake here. He had twelve children altogether, but it seems certain that there cannot have been more than four at the outside living in 1646.

³ Probably Richard, at that time between two and three years of age.

⁴ The fact that a daughter of his was buried at Blackawton, July 19, 1660, suggests that he remained here till the Restoration.

vicarage after the Restoration, and what is more, to recover the fifths from the intruder, Mr. Conant, who could not forbear discovering how loath he was to pay them by throwing the money upon the floor, at which Mr. Venn, smiling, said, "Well, well ! I will take the pains to pick it up."

There was one Mr. Venn whom I take to be the same person with this worthy old gentleman, who it is said was the first who read Common Prayer in the neighbouring church of Ottery St. Mary after the happy return of his Majesty. When he died I am not informed, but am assured he was a man of worth and learning, a good Christian and a good preacher, well-beloved in his parish, and spoken of with honour amongst them to this very day. I have nothing more to add but that I had the greatest part of this relation from a daughter-in-law of Mr. Venn, who assures me that she had often seen and read the account which the old gentleman drew up, as is aforesaid, of his own sufferings.

The above is taken from Walker's well-known volume. Some years ago, having heard of the existence of the collection called the "Walker MSS." at the Bodleian, I went to consult them (May 18, 1885). I found that they consisted of some twenty volumes of the answers which he had received in reply to the full printed list of questions sent out by him to every parish in which it seemed likely that any suitable information could be obtained. The letters are mostly dated about 1704, when some of the original actors in the Commonwealth events were still alive, and when those of the next generation were numerous. As in all such letters, there is much life and incident which is missing in the printed volumes. It must be admitted that in the case of Richard Venn these graphic touches serve to delineate a character not quite so meek and long-suffering as the piety of some of his descendants has been apt to picture. I do not mean that there is the slightest doubt cast on his sincerity or devotion ; but he evidently shared the strong feelings of the time, and expressed those feelings with a vigour of language which some persons would nowadays consider unbecoming in a clergyman.

In this case Walker's first informant was the Rev. Edward Battie, rector of Modbury, and former Fellow of King's College, who was personally acquainted with the widow of Richard Venn's son Dennis. Of this lady more will be told presently. She was at this time living at

Modbury, as housekeeper to Mr. and Mrs. Hele¹ of that village.

Mr. Battie's first letter is dated April 21, 1704, and is to the following effect (Walker MS., vol. ii. No. 344):—

. . . The widow of Mr. Dionysius (vulgo Dennis) Venn, late vicar of Holbeton, has promised me the sight and use of a manuscript of a very reverend divine related to her husband, and of his name, turned out in those times of affliction and persecution, of St. Mary Ottery (sic), containing a diary of all the sufferings he and his family underwent from those rebellious zealots. Some particulars which she related to me yesterday in my parlour are so barbarous and particular that I believe (if true), as I have great reason to believe, my Lord's whole diocese will scarce be able to parallel. I shall judge better when I see the book, and then you shall hear from me again.

Several other letters follow, in which Mr. Battie describes the efforts he had made, but in vain, to discover Richard Venn's personal narrative. He therefore collected from Mrs. Dennis Venn what she remembered to have read in this narrative and to have heard related by her husband :—

"I sent you what account Mrs. Venn could give of her father-in-law's sufferings. I am sorry it should miscarry, but with much searching I have found the original I took from her mouth, no more than what she professes to make oath of if required. The truth, and nothing but the truth, of what she had heard her husband read often out of the Diary of his father's sufferings." Then follows the substance of Walker's account above.

Another correspondent was a Mr. William Rowe, vicar of Otterton, 1689-1718, who, after supplying a number of facts, concludes—

"Sir, this is a short account of the ill treatment of Mr. Venn in those times, who was a good preacher and well-beloved among his parishioners. He is spoken of with honour to this very day. This I have at second-hand from one of my parish, who was Mr.

¹ The Heles were the principal landowners in Holbeton and Modbury. "Fleet, one of the finest estates in the county of Devon, continued in the Hele family until the year 1716. Richard Hele, dying in 1709, was succeeded by his only son, James Modyford Hele, on whose death in 1716 this branch of the family became extinct" (Notes to the edition of Risdon's *Survey* published in 1811). There is a huge and splendid monument to the members of three successive generations of the family, in Holbeton church. (For description see *Trans. of Dev. Association*, vol. xxxii.)

Venn's servant-maid at that time, who is confined to her bed and so I could not conveniently talk to her myself." (Published in *Dev. Ass.* xxvi. 279.)

The narrative itself, as stated, was not to be found, but Mr. Battie's search was not fruitless, for he sent two or three fragments which had evidently belonged to such a diary. One of these consists of ten or twelve pages by Richard Venn, giving an account of his trial and condemnation. It is so fragmentary that it can hardly be given here; in fact it looks more like a rough copy of notes than a deliberate narrative. It concludes as follows:—

Declining to a periede, the Table demanded of me what I meant by the thirteen to the Romans? I answered in this sense, the resistance of the higher powers drew upon the resisters with their owne hands damnation. Mr. Champneys demanded who were the higher powers? I returned: Those whom God hath set upp to be supream head governors of churches and states. Who are they? I told them out of Peter: To the King as supream. Mr. Vaughan replies, Yea but it is powers. Not one? I returned can he be a king and a subject too? Yes (Champneys) to God.

For so St. Paul expounds himselfe where he saith (which I delivered with hand erected) He beareth not the sword in vaine.

Immediately they sate downe as Thunder-strooke. Cleere the barre. This only remembred of Raw, upon my speech of St. Paul's meaning, that if there were any such thinge he would give me the booke. I told him it was scarce worth the having (being so torne and ruffled that I fear me that was torne out). But the malice of my adversaries did not so rest, fearing that being shutt out from the barre I had been cleered they said, It shall not goe so, we will lay him in cold iron before we have done.

Beeing recalld Mr. Champneys quartered my sentences into four parts, with these tearmes, demanding what I could say for myselfe? Sir, if you beleeeve these witnesses I must be subject to your censure: which was thus,—

Seeing you are convict of heinous lying against the parliament, so heinous and unusuall as never came before the Committee of Exon; you must expect a more sharpe and unusuall censure. To be outed of your means . . . [torn] . . . your house within this month, execute your office no more in this countye, and bee committed to the Marshall untill further order (which I could never heare of since).

Two other fragments of interest seem to have been

found by Mr. Battie. One of these was a copy of a letter written by Richard Venn when in prison at Exeter.

Honoured Sir John [probably Collins].

May it please you to pity a distressed parish and family ready to perish, the one in soul, the other in body, without a speedy supply. Let it suffice ; a two months' imprisonment may satisfy for a verbal relation though never so . . . , nor so proved but by one oath of the basest in the parish now wanting a pastor ; but your honour shall assist us with a fair and happy enlargement. We shall ever number you with that angel which plucked a Peter out of prison, and pour out our perpetual prayers to Almighty God, and praises to yourself, for so great and unexpected a blessing, till your honour assume that mansion which shall need no more petition but eternal possession.

So prayeth

Honoured Sir

Your humble servant

OTTERTON in Newgate.

The other fragment is a copy of verses written after his release from prison. Mr. Battie, in his letter conveying them, adds the remarks, "However ordinary these lines may seem, yet I assure you during his imprisonment he wrote several copies to his friends and relations which the best poets of our age would not be ashamed to own, full of loyalty and religion."

1646, October 30 imprisoned : released September 3 following.

We were immured in Newgate by Ro. Duke :

Knave-Clapp : ¹ Ro. Boules : Witch-Callard, who did look

As if she kissed the devil that same morn,

And had received from him those lips of scorn.

Such as we took for kindred flock and friends,

But found close bloody and malicious fiends.

Thence came September out we crept and came

In spite of all their combination frame :

Where they (who should have laboured to preserve us)

Threatened (with bailies) to hang, rot, and starve us.

Cursed be their malice, armed with cruelty

And persecution for our loyalty.

¹ "Knave-Clapp" is probably Robert Clapp, whose name appears as one of the surveyors for the "Survey of Church Lands, 1649," in the Lambeth Library. In this capacity he reports on the state of Otterton. Or he may be the Richard Clapp of Sidbury, who was appointed Sequestration Commissioner for the county of Devon under the Parliament.

Be thou the Judge, oh God ; thy cause advance,
 Receive our thanks for thy deliverance.
 Thine, thine alone, who made their vows all vain,
 Thundered ¹ from Heaven and brought us back again.
 The preacher's whole is this : A sound belief,
 A grave expression and a godly life.

RICHARD VENN.

As stated in the narrative, Mr. Venn in his wanderings, after his expulsion from Otterton, spent some time as a minister at Blackawton. Walker, with his usual diligence, seems to have written to the vicar there, Mr. John Adams, from whom he received the following information :—

Blackawton, May 7, 1706.

. . . Mr. Thomas Friend was vicar in the Civil wars, and died here in the year 1653. Then the place was vacant for some time till Mr. Richard Venn, who was sequestered at Otterton, came and was minister for a year or more ; and then he was sequestered there also. Then the place was vacant again for about a year and a half, and then Mr. Richard Luist came.

It is rather strange that Mr. Adams should not have referred to the following extract from his parish register, which I owe to a late rector (Mr. D. B. Chater, May 1885) :—

Mr. Richard Venn, M.A., was vicar of Otterton in this County, and sequestered by the rebels in Cromwell's time. He wandered up and down, and at last He came to this Parish. After the Restoration He returned to Otterton. He was a worthy man.

This curious note is amongst the entries of 1657, but was obviously inserted by some vicar after 1660. It will be seen that Mr. Adams says that Richard Venn was only suffered to remain at Blackawton for "a year or more." This may be so, but he must either have returned again or have left some of his family behind him, for there is the following entry amongst the burials of 1660, "the 19th of July was buried Frances, the daughter of Mr. Richard ffen, minister." We gather also from the will of his widow that they owned a house and garden at Blackawton.

¹ "During imprisonment : I find in other verses a great storm then happened"
 (Note by E. Battie).

During his wanderings he took refuge for a time at the family home, Broadhembury, where he had cousins living. Two rather interesting records of the vigour and pertinacity with which he here continued to assert his views as to Church and King, are preserved. One of them is contained in the "Charge of Delinquency against Richard Drewe of Broadhembury," in the *State Papers, Domestic*. It is as follows :¹—

November 25, 1651. That the said Richard Drew did relieve mainteyne and protect divers Cavaleers and Officers of the late King's Army, namely one Lieut. Whitby and divers others who had done mischeife in the Country, and procured and assisted their escape. . . . That the said Richard Drewe procured one Richard Venne a Minister, a notorious Cavaleer, and one that was sequestered, to preach constantly in the parish of Broadhembury, and procured him maintenance for the same, to the great offence of the well affected in those parts, the said Venne preaching up the King's Cawse against the Parliament.

The other reference is contained in the following entry in the parish register of Broadhembury :—

Ellis Dollin and Anne Burgen of Otterton were married (*cum annulo*) in Broadhembury the 2d day of July 1649 into the vicarage. By me Richard ffenne.

Who the vicar² was at this precise time I do not know, but he also must have been a bold man to allow such an entry of the use of the ring in marriage—a ceremony so distasteful to the Puritans—to be made in the register.

As to the minister intruded into Mr. Venn's place, a few words may be added. He was Richard Conant, of Emmanuel College—that famous hot-bed of Puritanism at the time—where he had only recently graduated as B.A. He belonged to a well-known local family, resident in and about East Budleigh, and was cousin of John Conant, the Rector of Exeter College and Vice-Chancellor of Oxford from 1657 to 1660. On his supersession from Otterton

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, No. 157. It is mostly given in the printed *Calendar*.

² Probably the regular vicar was sequestered. The return of 1650 (Lansd. MS. 459) for Broadhembury is "No minister: incumbent suspended." In 1657 a Mr Josiah Bangor was appointed (Lamb. MSS. 993, 998).

in 1660, he retired to his native place, the neighbouring village of East Budleigh, where the baptism of several of his children is recorded. After some years he conformed, and became vicar of that parish from 1672 till his death in 1688. Mr. Walker's inference as to his character is probably tinged with prejudice. Whatever he may have originally been, Mr. Conant seems by all accounts to have proved "a hardworking, painstaking, exemplary clergyman" at Budleigh. (See *Trans. of Devon Association*, xxvi. 260, where some account of his family is given.) A number of his relatives are entered amongst the Oxford admissions of the seventeenth century.

As Mr. Venn was living at the time of the Restoration he was at once, in accordance with the rule in such cases, replaced in his vicarage. He did not live long afterwards, being buried at Otterton, June 28, 1662. His will was proved at Exeter in the following July, the inventory being exhibited by his brother Robert, rector of Thelbridge. These, together with the will of the widow, are given further on.

Mr. Venn was twice married. His first wife was Elizabeth Westcott of the adjacent village of East Budleigh, whom he married at St. Martin's, Exeter, July 26, 1630. By her he had three children, who were all baptized¹ at Otterton: viz. Elizabeth, August 28, 1631; Francis, January 7, 1632; and Francis again, May 10, 1633. He must have married a second time in 1640 or 1641, his wife being named Margaret. She survived him four years, dying in April 1666. By her he had nine children: viz. Frances, baptized at Otterton, September 8, 1642 (she was buried at Blackawton, July 19, 1660); Richard, baptized at Otterton, February 11, 1643-4; Dennis, born in 1648; William; Robert; John; Margaret; Ann; and Mary. All of this second family except the first two must have been born away from Otterton, during their father's exile, and very naturally no record of their baptism has been found. Of the children by the first marriage, probably all died very

¹ These are the dates of baptism given in the Otterton register. One of the sons (or daughters) Francis must apparently have been premature: the other was buried at Otterton, September 19, 1638.

young. Of those by the second marriage, all but Frances were alive at the time of their mother's death in 1666.

My father in his young days took up with much zeal the inquiry which his father had commenced ; and paid a visit to Devonshire in 1823. He wrote as follows :—

My father's enquiries respecting the family of the vicar of Otterton led him to the conclusion that none were remaining of the family in Otterton or its neighbourhood. But I heard a few years after his death that my cousins, daughters of Edward Venn of Camberwell, had found a descendant of the vicar still living at Otterton, though in reduced circumstances, being the wife of Mr. M. G. Palmer, landlord of a small public-house called the King's Head. She had shown them several old memorials of her ancestor. Mr. E. B. Venn, the brother of my cousins, assured me that he had written to procure all such memorials, or copies of them. As he was not successful, I took the earliest opportunity in my power to visit Devonshire, which was not till the year 1823. I found to my great regret that Mrs. Palmer had died a few years before. I eagerly enquired of her husband whether I could see any papers¹ or books which she had left. He told me that after her death he had cleared out all the drawers and destroyed a number of old letters, and that he had given two old bibles containing family names to a daughter and a son. . . . He informed me that his wife was the only child of Robert Venn, a mariner ; that her mother was buried the day of her christening, about the year 1753. Mr. Palmer had never heard of any relations of his wife except two old maiden aunts, Grace and Molly Venn, who died many years ago very aged, having kept a school at Otterton. His wife had a life interest in a small farm which her father left her. Mr. Palmer also informed me that his wife was buried, at her own desire, in the grave of the former Richard Venn, vicar. . . . He had buried her with all respect in the tomb of her ancestor,² and had gone to the expense of having the old tombstone, which contained a long account of that ancestor, all chiselled down to look like new, and to receive her name on a smooth surface ! . . . He gave me an old dictionary which his wife

¹ As he says in a letter dated June 3, 1823, "On Monday C. Kennaway drove me over in his gig to Sidmouth. After seeing that place I walked to Otterton, visited alone the church, and thought on the days which were long since passed. Met with (Mr. Palmer) the only representative of the family of the confessor, and learnt from him with feelings which those who possess antiquarian zeal can alone fully estimate, that upon his wife's death he had burnt a whole packet of letters of the family. The poor man, discovering my vexation, to ease it added, 'Lawk, Zur, some of them were above 200 years old, written by an old man who was once vicar of this place.' Alas ! Alas !"

² As will be seen by the pedigree in the Appendix, Mrs. Palmer was not a direct descendant of Richard.

had preserved as an old family book. But it had lately been rebound, and the old blank leaves lost, and she had herself written upon it, "John Ven, grandson of Rd. Ven formerly vicker of Otterton, his book" . . . Mr Palmer told me that the only one of his children who could give me information was a married daughter, Mrs. Ellis, wife of a gardener at Longleat. To her I wrote, and received an interesting letter in reply.

LONGLEAT, 12th August 1823.

REV. SIR—I received your letter dated 1st of August, and was not a little surprised on perusing a letter from such a distant relation as you are pleased to consider yourself—it at first appeared to me a moral curiosity—because the rich to claim the poor was inverting the general practice of the world—be that as it may, such condescension ought to have had an early answer, and for the delay I beg pardon, which I flatter myself will be freely granted as it proceeded from my three little ones being so very ill. I only wish I could answer every question you are pleased to ask, but I regret to say I know but little of my mother's family, for very often when the name of Venn was mentioned she would burst into a flood of tears and endeavour all she could to suppress the conversation, whether it proceeded from delicacy being so situated in life, that is in a little public-house, or from her feelings for her ancestor, I know not. I have heard her repeatedly say she never would see any of the Venn family while she was in that situation. She knew there were some of them in London, if living, but in what part she did not know. As to the former vicar, I never heard her name him, more than Mr. Venn. There are two large tombstones in the churchyard which I think contain our ancestors in question, but these are sunk level with the ground, and I fear the inscription on them is not legible. If it was, you could easily find the names of both. She often used to tell or amuse me with an anecdote of the gentleman now spoken of, which occurred in the time of Monmouth.¹ He, being a Monmouth's man, and a little Methodistical in his discourses, had his gown taken from him, and on being re-established, chose, the following Sunday, his text from the Psalms, as follows, "I have been young, but am now old; yet saw I never the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread." There being an old woman in the church, that was fond of my great-grandfather,

¹ Our informant had evidently got out of her depth in the matter of history and dates; but it is a striking illustration of what Macaulay has said as to the intensity of the feelings, about Monmouth's invasion and the subsequent trials, which lingered amongst the country people of the West. Mrs. Ellis could think of no rebellion but that of Monmouth. Sedgemoor is close by Taunton, and only a few miles from the Peyhembury district; and I find that one prisoner deported to the West Indies for his share in the rebellion was named Edward Venn; he died at sea.

rose, and, with more zeal than decorum, said "Eas, Measter, but it was ameast come toot." This I have heard her relate several times. But of her own father she knew but little more than what she heard from her guardians, who were her aunts, her father's sisters, Grace and Mary Venn. These unfortunately died before my mother attained her fifteenth year. Her own mother died in child-bed when she was but a week old. Shortly after, my grandfather, returning from his voyage, I believe from China, was so much shocked at my grandmother's death that he left the country altogether when she was but twenty weeks old: this occurred in the year 1752. Robert Venn, my grandfather, continued writing home for years after. And whether the ship was lost, or whether he settled in any other part, we never could ascertain. Such like circumstances I suppose must have been corrosive to her spirit, and often checked her when I believe my mother sometimes wished to say more on the subject. I am sorry to hear that my father has destroyed the letters. My grandmother's maiden name was Anne Stockes. As for the old books my father mentioned, there were two old Bibles: one he gave to my eldest sister when married, and the other to my brother. These I have no doubt may contain family names. I am extremely sorry my father should make such mistake in saying I had my mother's old books. The only one I have is *Paradise Lost*, and the only name written therein is Richard, and has the date 1736. That is all I know; I wish I knew more. There was one Mr. Venn that became very celebrated in the time of one Romain, a Methodist, but I suppose you could glean all the information required in the history of Devon; if you can find any you will greatly oblige by letting me know. I wish you had returned here in your way to London, as I should like to see one of my mother's relations. Such as my cottage is would have been a welcome reception, and should you at any time have any commands in this part of the country, I shall feel an honour in answering, or doing what you wish. I am sorry I can say so little on the subject you are pleased to enquire about, and as I know so little, must conclude, and remain, Revd. Sir,—Yours faithfully,

NANCY VENN ELLIS.

The enquiries of my cousin, E. B. Venn, led (says my father), after the lapse of many years, to my acquisition of a very precious relic of Richard Venn, the confessor, of far higher value than any mere names and dates. He wrote to the Rev. E. Coleridge, vicar of Ottery St. Mary, to make some enquiry respecting the name of Venn in the parish registers. In reply Mr. Coleridge stated that he had in his possession a family Bible which had belonged to Richard Venn, vicar of Otterton, and he sent this copy of a note on a blank leaf of the Bible, "Ex dono

Jael Reyness An. Dom. 1637. M^m I brought this booke from Mr. Richard Venn Viker of Otterton, June 25, 1662, who made use of it 20 years. See the interlinings and strakings p^r Richard Venn aged 61 years. Ricardus Venn obiit June 28, 1662, on Fryday. Per me R. Duke aged 61, 1662."

When my cousin told me of this Bible he bound me in honour not to try to obtain it for myself, as he was taking measures to secure it for himself, as the senior branch of the family. As in after life I became separated by distance from my cousin, I never heard the result of his negotiations for the book, beyond the fact that Mr. Coleridge refused to part with it on any consideration.

In the year 1864, when I served on the Royal Commission on Clerical Subscription, Sir John Coleridge, one of the commissioners, asked me casually whether I had any relations in Devonshire near his seat, because there was a respectable family there of my name. I replied that I knew nothing of the family to which he referred, but that some generations back my family had held a living in Devonshire of which his family [*i.e.* the Dukes] were patrons; and I told him of the note in the blank leaf of a family Bible. This evidently interested him, but he recollected nothing about such a book: if it was in existence he should be glad to procure it for me. A few days afterwards Sir John told me that in boyhood he had heard his father say that a gentleman in London had applied to him for an old family Bible; but as he could not ascertain that the individual applying was properly entitled to the book he had kept it. Sir John kindly added that when he went into Devonshire he would make a search for the Bible throughout the family. A few months afterwards he sent me from Devonshire a dilapidated book with the sides torn off, and the title-pages and blank leaves all gone, and the Apocrypha torn out of the middle, so that it was in two parts. But there has been little difficulty in identifying the book as the companion of Richard Venn in his troubles and persecutions."

We have the book, and it is certainly full of "interlinings and strakings" as stated in the lost note formerly inscribed in one of the blank pages.

I append the wills of Richard and Margaret Venn, as these early documents are always of some interest:—

"In the name of God, Amen. I, Richard Venn, vicar of the parish of Otterton in the county of Devon, being in perfect sense and expecting shortly the time of my dissolution, do here make my last will and testament. Imprimis; I bequeath my

soule into the hands of God my Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, and my body unto Christian buryall. Item I give to my son Dennis all my books. Item I give to each of my children twelve pence apiece; and the rest of my goods and dues I give to my wife Margaret Ven, whom I make my executrix; and I desire John Macy to see this my will performed, and for his pains I give him twelve pence." (Dated June 25, 1662; proved at Exeter, July 3, 1662.)

An inventory of all the goods and chattels of Richard Ven, vicar of Otterton, deceased; taken and exhibited by Robert Ven, rector of Thelbridge; also by Richard Austin and Richard Bayly of the parish of Otterton.

His wearing apparell, gownd and books	£10 0 0	In the Porch Chamber over the Porch; 1 bedstead, 1 desk	£0 4 6
In the Hall; 1 table, 1 forme, 1 joint-stool, 2 chairs, 1 carpet, 1 glass cage	1 0 0	In the Kitchen Chamber; 2 bed- steads, 1 chest, 1 coffer	2 10 0
In the Kitchen; 1 table-board, 1 forme, 3 brass pans, 3 crockes and pot-hangers, 1 skillet, 2 andires, 1 spit, 9 pewter dishes, 1 tankard, 1 chair	2 5 0	1 bedstead, and 1 bed more	0 12 0
In the Brewhouse; 1 salting tub, 2 barrels, 2 tubbs, 1 joint-stool, 1 tub	0 13 4	For wooll	0 7 0
In the Chamber over the Hall; 1 bed- stead and bedform, 1 table board, 1 little writing table, 1 settee, 2 chairs	0 18 0	For corne, malt, and provision	1 10 0
		For wood and fuell	1 10 0
		For corne and peas and beans in the ground	30 0 0
		For Hogs and Soyle (?)	2 0 0
		A little mare	1 10 0
		A furnace pan	0 10 0
		For things forgotten	0 2 0
			<hr/>
			£59 11 10
			<hr/>
			(sic)

It seems evident that the "Hall" was the dining and sitting room, and that there were three bedrooms in the house. If the total possessions seem few, it must be remembered that it was only two years since Mr. Venn had come back into possession of his vicarage. It will be

noticed that the growing crops constitute more than half his total wealth.

Will of Margaret Venn, widow, of Otterton.

She bequeaths . . . "unto Richard, my son, my great brass crock. Unto Dennis Venn, my son, my standing bedstead and featherbed whereon I do usually lie, with blankets, coverlet, bolster and pillows to the same belonging. . . . Unto William Venn, my son, my dwelling house and garden wherein I do live at Otterton (with reversion to Margaret Venn). . . . To Margaret Venn, my daughter, my best coat and waistcoat. . . . To Ann Venn, my daughter, a dwelling house and garden lying in Blackawton. . . . To Anne Venn my gowne and one hulland sheete." Mentions also Robert, youngest son, and Mary, youngest daughter. Youngest sons, John and Robert, executors. Dated April 27, 1666; proved at Exeter in the same year. Witnesses, John Macey, Richard Austin, and Michael Venn of Otterton, and Robert Bayley of East Budleigh.

Inventory.

Wearing apparell . . .	£2 10 0	sideboard, and 1	
In the Hall; 1 table		feather bolster . . .	£5 16 0
board and form,		In the little	
3 joyned stools, 4		Chamber; 2 half-	
chairs, 1 settle, 1		head bedsteads	
glass cage, 1 fry-		and beds, with	
ing pan, and 2 fire		blankets, and	
dogs	1 6 0	coverlets, and	
Two little sides of		bolsters	4 0 0
pork	0 12 0	In the little House	
One debt due to me	0 9 0	within the Hall;	
Three silver spoons,		16 pewter dishes . . .	1 4 0
etc.	1 10 0	One table board, 1	
In the Kitchen; 1		truckle bedstead,	
trendle, 3 tubs, 2		standing in the	
barrels, 3 brass		vicarage house . . .	1 0 0
pans, 2 old brass		One truckle bed-	
crocks, 1 pair and-		stead and bed	
irons, and 1 gibb .	3 5 0	blankets, coverlets,	
In the Chamber; 1		bolsters, and	
bedstead, 1 sheet,		pillows	1 4 0
1 blanket and		Two old table	
coverlet, 1 feather-		clothes, 2 table	
bed, 1 chest, 2		napkins	0 4 0
coffers, 2 stools, 1		One little old nagg .	1 10 0

1½ acres of corn in the ground . . .	£1 10 0	and garden at Blackawton . . .	£9 0 0
One dwelling house and garden at Otterton . . .	9 0 0	For old implements and things forgot- ten and unpriced . . .	0 2 6
One dwelling house			<hr/> £44 2 6 <hr/>

Richard was not the only one of his family who incurred suspicion during the troubles. He had a younger brother Robert, who was baptized at Otterton, April 9, 1608; matriculated at Oxford, from Wadham College, October 30, 1629; was admitted B.A., December 4, 1632; and M.A.—being then of Pembroke College,—July 4, 1635. He was ordained deacon at Exeter, May 24, 1635; and priest, not till after the Restoration, early in 1660-1. He was instituted to the rectory of Thelbridge in 1644, where he remained until his death in 1689.

The following is the account of his experiences, as given by Mr. Walker's correspondent:—

The Rev. Mr. Robert Ven, rector of Thelbridge, was Master of Arts of Wadham College, Oxford. He was a person of probity, loyalty, and integrity, a lover of episcopacy, monarchy, piety, and obedience, regular devotions, decency, and order. These were things that must, by a necessary consequence, make him obnoxious to the Cromwellian disturbers of the peace of the Church and State. Being thus reputed or suspected for a delinquent or malignant, he was accordingly summoned to the town of Tiverton in this county, there to appear before a general council of two or three wretched tryers (of whom Lewis Stuckley was one), there to answer for malignancy or delinquency, heresy or immorality, heterodoxy or insufficiency, or whatever else they had a mind to charge upon him. The good man Mr. Ven appeared. Being come before them, among other sage and wise questions suitable for the gravity, wisdom, and learning of these rude, impudent, imperious, schismatical hypocrites, it was asked, "What the Devil was?" Had¹ the good man answered "he was *ὁ πειράζων*" (as he is called, Matt. iv. 3.), *i.e.* a tryer, he had answered truly, though perhaps not so prudently at that juncture. However, Mr. Ven, by particular friendship of Sir Thomas Stuckley, knight, who was brother to Lewis Stuckley the tryer, and a gentleman of probity, sense, and honour, kept his place and lived in it reputably and comfortably till the year 1689,

¹ Walker has erroneously given this "Here the good man answered . . . He had answered truly . . ."

and then gave up the ghost in a good old age, being succeeded by his son, Mr. Lawrence Ven, now rector, 1704.

L. SOUTHCOMB.

Apparently his ministerial zeal in his parish outweighed his doubtful opinions in the estimate of the authorities. But it is obvious that he was far less of a party man than his brother. For instance, in a "Register of all the church livings in various parts of the country" drawn up for the Parliament and compiled in their interest (Lansdowne MS. 459, British Museum), Robert Ven of Thelbridge is described as "a preaching minister." It is added that the value of the living was £40, and that the patron was Richard Shortridge. The date of this return is said to be about 1650. Moreover, the fact that though he was ordained deacon in 1635, he did not become a priest until after the Restoration, looks rather significant. The well-known royalist sufferer, Joseph Hall, was Bishop of Exeter from 1627 to 1641.

During his researches in 1823 my father visited Thelbridge, where he found an old wooden monument to this Robert Venn, hanging in the chancel, to the left of the communion table. Some fifty years afterwards, my brother, being then one of the rectors of Tiverton, went over to Thelbridge to find if the inscription was still in existence. At first no trace of it could be discovered, but at last, after a prolonged search with the aid of a ladder, it was found hidden away in the tower, whither it had been moved at the restoration of the church in 1870. Not long afterwards he and I rode over there to ascertain if it could be repaired and restored. We found it in too dilapidated a condition for this, so we arranged to have the inscription copied on a marble slab and replaced in the original position. It runs as follows:—

H. S. I.

Corpus Reverendi admodum Viri

ROBERTI VEN A. M. GULIELMI VEN τὸν μακαρίτου

De Otterton in agro Devoniensi vicarii Filii

Qui

Purum verbum Dei	} annos {	54 constanter predicabat
Hujus Parochiæ Gregem		46 fideliter pascebat

VENN FAMILY ANNALS

Veræ Religionis Elementis Adolescentes instituendo
 Omni Pietate Seniores confirmando
 Ceteraque Sacerdotis Evangelici
 Munia strenue obeundo
 Indefessus
 Ἑτεροδοξίας Tempore tamen Ὁρθοδόξος
 Veritatis ac Pacis semper amans
 Verbis Voto Vita sanctus castus humillimus
 Æræ Xtianæ } anno { MDCLXXXIX
 Ætatis suæ } { LXXXI
 Cælo maturus
 Animam exhaluit
 Φιλοστοργίας ergo
 LAU. VENN Filius natu minimus
 Curâ animarum hic loci Διάδοχος
 H. M. P.

(The original tablet of wood decaying, this more permanent memorial was placed here by two descendants of the above-named William Ven.

John Venn, Fellow of Gonville and Caius
College, Cambridge.

Henry Venn, Rector of Clare Portion,
Tiverton, 1880.)

DENNIS VENN

OF the twelve children of Richard Venn several died young, and of the remainder, with a single exception, no personal details are known. This exception was Dennis, who continued the clerical career of his father and grandfather. He must have been born during his father's wanderings, in or about the year 1648, so that it is not surprising that no entry of his baptism has been found. He matriculated at Oxford, May 25, 1666, from New Inn Hall, but migrated two months later to the college of his father and grandfather, Exeter. He is described in the university register as "*filius pauperis*," like his predecessors, and his age is given as eighteen. He graduated B.A., February 1669, and proceeded subsequently to the M.A. degree.

He soon returned to his native county, and was ordained priest by Dr. Sparrow, Bishop of Exeter, at the cathedral, March 19, 1670-1. In those days of reaction the son of Richard Venn was probably well known; at any rate, he had not long to wait for preferment. He was instituted, on the presentation of Henry Northleigh, Esq., of Pearmartin, to the rectory of Dodbrooke, October 6, 1671. He was also instituted to the vicarage of Holbeton, November 5, 1673, on the patronage of the King, having obtained a dispensation from the archbishop to hold the two livings together, though he actually resigned Dodbrooke, October 10, 1674. Some time previous to this he had been appointed domestic chaplain to the Earl of Denbigh, who does not, however, appear to have resided or held property in the county. Like his grandfather, he was a rural dean, holding that of Woodley.

He was twice married. His first wife is described in the Holbeton register, as "Mrs. Luce Fortiscue of Combe in the parish of Revelstoke." He married her at Revelstoke, June 29, 1683. By her he had a daughter Lucy, who died in 1688, and was buried at Holbeton, and probably a second daughter, Jane, buried there May 8, 1692-3. Mrs. Venn was buried at Holbeton, July 12, 1688. He married, secondly, January 6, 1689-90, also at Holbeton, Patience, daughter of the Rev. John Gay, vicar of East Anthony,¹ near Plymouth. Mr. Gay died in 1675, and his daughter seems to have been resident in Holbeton for some years before her marriage, as her name occurs in the churchwarden's accounts as contributing to the relief of the Irish Protestants in 1685. By his second wife Mr. Venn had three children: Richard, born at Holbeton, January 7, 1690-1, and baptized there January 27; Patience, born August 4, 1692, buried February 23, 1695-6; and Dennis, born December 11, 1694, buried October 29, 1695.

Dennis Venn was buried at Holbeton, February 12, 1694-5. There is no monument to his memory in the church or churchyard. As will be seen, he died at the comparatively early age of forty-seven, and perhaps rather suddenly, as he left no will. His administration was taken out by his widow.

Inventory of the goods and credits of Dennis Venne, late vicar of Holbeton, who died the 8th day of February 1694-5, and taken and appraised by William Adams, vicar of Yohumpton, and John King of Holbeton, April 6, 1695.

His wearing apparell	£4	0	0
Item four beds	8	0	0
Item the books in his studdy	5	0	0
Item his plate	5	0	0
Item his pocket money	1	0	0
Item his pans, crocks, and kettles	3	0	0
Item his pewter	1	10	0
Item his horse, cow, one asse, and one young bullock	7	0	0

¹ There are three places of this name in Cornwall: one on the east side of Falmouth harbour, near St. Mawes (St. Anthony in Roseland); one on the west side, near St. Martin (St. Anthony in Meneage, or in Kerrier); and one commonly called East Anthony, a little to the west of Devonport. This last is the one referred to. For some account of the Gay family see the Appendix.



HOLBETON CHURCH, 1900.
Pews and Stained Glass modern.



Item his chests, tulley boxes, trunks, stools, and chairs	£1	10	0
Item for cyder . . . and hogshead	1	10	0
Item for lumber, goods, and some other things omitted and not prized	1	0	0
Item his credits	7	0	0
	<hr/>		
	£45	10	0

Exhibited (and signed) by Patience Venne, relict.

His widow survived him more than seventeen years, her administration being granted to her son Richard, October 25, 1712. So far as can be ascertained she spent the rest of her life at Holbeton or its neighbourhood, but there is no entry of her burial in the register. In 1704, as we have seen above (p. 26), she was living at Modbury, as housekeeper in the Hele family. She probably remained there for some years, as her son Richard was educated there about 1702-1707. My grandfather, John Venn of Clapham, who diligently collected from his father such family traditions as survived, has preserved one little anecdote as illustrative of the firmness and judgment with which she carried out the training of the young children whom her husband left in her charge. "A saying of hers is reported which sufficiently marks her character as corresponding with the impression I have given of it. Being asked when she intended to send her son to college she replied, 'When he can say "No" boldly'" (*Parentalia*). There is no doubt, as will presently be seen, as to the boldness of character, whencesoever derived, which this son showed in after life.

RICHARD VENN, OF ST. ANTHOLIN'S,
LONDON, 1691-1739

IN the case of this rather distinguished divine we have come within the scope of family tradition. Many incidents of his private life were gleaned — doubtless through his sons, Edward, Henry, and Richard — by his grandson John, the rector of Clapham. These were recorded in the *Parentalia* of the latter, the passages following, in smaller type, being taken from this MS. volume.

He was born at Holbeton, January 7, 1690-1, and baptized there on January 27 following.

In his infancy his nurse suffered him to fall out of her arms, by which he received an injury in his hip bone which occasioned him ever afterwards to halt a little, and which rendered him incapable of walking far without pain. When he was about eleven years old he was put to school at Modbury, a few miles from Holbeton, where his mother was then living. After five years he was transferred to Tiverton, Blundell's school being at that time the principal school in the county. Here he remained for two years under Mr. Rayner,¹ a rather eminent master. (His education at this school, it may be remarked, was the cause of his quitting the College and University of his forefathers and entering Cambridge, the University ever since of his descendants. Mr. Blundell had left endowments for two scholarships and two fellowships at Sidney Sussex. It was to one of these scholarships that Richard Venn was elected in the summer of 1709. He commenced residence there in October following.) In the

¹ William Rayner, M.A., of Christ Church, Master at Blundell's from 1698 to his death in 1730. Amongst his pupils was Thomas Hayter, afterwards Bishop of Norwich and of London. The eccentric "King of the Gypsies," Bampfylde Moore Carew, seems to have been a contemporary there of Richard Venn. His escapade of running away from school, to join the gypsy gang, took place in the year after R. Venn left. (For some notes on *Blundelliana* see the *Trans. of the Dev. Assoc.* xxiii. 410.)

University he was a diligent student, and became an able scholar, and his general conduct was such as to recommend him to the notice and esteem of many distinguished scholars, with whom he formed an intimacy which continued during his life.

A very extraordinary incident occurred whilst he was resident which places in the highest point of view the purity and strength of his principles. There was a gentleman's family between three and four miles from Cambridge to which he had been early introduced, and with which he had formed an intimate acquaintance. It consisted of the husband, and his wife, a beautiful woman many years younger than himself. My grandfather possessed a handsome person, a mind well stored with variety of knowledge, an easy frankness of manner, and so rich a fund of conversation that his company was generally sought and highly esteemed. One day a carriage was sent for him, with an invitation to dinner. When he arrived at the house he found the gentleman had been unexpectedly called out, but the lady said she expected his return soon. There was no other company, and they dined together. The lady exerted herself to please her guest, and my grandfather failed not to render himself agreeable. The time passed away imperceptibly. Tea was introduced, the master of the house being still absent. Apologies were made for him, and surprise expressed that he was not returned. Several times Mr. Venn offered to take his leave, but was entreated to wait a little longer. It was too far for him to walk ; the carriage should be got ready, but it could not be more than a few minutes before Mr. ——— would be at home, and he would be greatly disappointed to find Mr. Venn gone. Supper was brought in, and by various artifices and pressing entreaties my grandfather was induced to stay until eleven o'clock. A key was then given to the lady's conduct, which had already appeared such as might have excited suspicion in a less pure mind. She gave him to understand that her husband was in London, and that the regard she entertained for him had induced her to send for him under cover of her husband's name to enjoy the pleasure of his society. The moment that he discovered this purpose he rose from his chair, reproved her with a stern and resolute air, and without waiting for a reply left the room and the house. The night was cold, dark, and dreary, his distance from home long, and he unable to walk without pain. He went on till he came to a church¹ which stood near the road about the midway of his journey, in the porch of which he sat down to rest himself. Whilst he was here the clock struck twelve. The stillness around him, the midnight hour, the happy escape which he had

¹ According to tradition, the house was at Milton, and the church at which he stopped was that of Chesterton.

experienced, all these circumstances gave solemnity to the scene, and deeply impressed his mind. He knelt down and adored God. His soul was elevated with gratitude. It was a night much to be remembered by him, and never did he enjoy a higher degree of true happiness than whilst he was thus fleeing at midnight from the scene of temptation.

Mr. Venn took the degree of B.A. in January 1712-3. The "Tripos lists" are not published so early as this, but from the MS. lists at the Registry it appears that he was what would now be called "6th junior optime." He graduated M.A.¹ in 1716. According to Baker, the well-known antiquary of St. John's, he was a candidate for a foundation fellowship in 1713-4, but he was passed over on the ground that the Blundell fellowships were the proper appointments for those who had been scholars from his school at Tiverton. When one of these fellowships fell vacant two or three years afterwards he was ineligible, owing to his marriage. (Add. MSS. Brit. Mus., MS. Baker, x. 420.)

He married, about the end of the year 1716, Maria Anna Isabella Margareta Beatrix, daughter of John Ashton, Esq. The exact date and place of the marriage are not known, but the licence was taken out at the Faculty Office of the Archbishop of Canterbury on November 2, 1716. The unusual number of her Christian names—extraordinary, indeed, for any lady of that time—introduces us to a rather romantic bit of political history. So little information is given in the published sources of information as to the antecedents of Mr. Ashton, that I have preferred to relegate to a separate section of this volume such materials as I have succeeded in collecting from various records. It will suffice to say here that he was of the family of Ashton of Penketh, since extinct in the male line, and that he had been from an early age in the court service of King James the Second or of his queen. The exact office he held is difficult to determine, but it was probably that of paymaster to the Queen. After the flight of the King in 1689 he continued

¹ As was not uncommon amongst the more distinguished clergy, he afterwards incorporated at the sister University, his name appearing in the Oxford lists as M.A., January 20, 1729-30.

actively to work in the Stuart interest, and late in the year 1690 he was unfortunately concerned in the plot commonly known by the name of "Lord Preston's." He, together with Lord Preston and Mr. Elliott, were captured off Tilbury Fort, in a small vessel which they had hired, and being found in possession of despatches to the English Court at St. Germain's, they were all three put on their trial for high treason. The two others escaped, partly, it is believed, by giving information to the Government, but Ashton was condemned to death. He was executed at Tyburn on January 28, 1690-1. In consequence of a petition to the Queen the usual horrible accompaniments of execution for treason were remitted in his case, and his body was given over to his friends for burial.

A few years before his death Mr. Ashton had married Mary, daughter of Mr. Edward Rigby ("Rigby of Burgh," in the Lancashire *Visitations*). There were several children offspring of this marriage. As a special mark of favour, the queen of James the Second stood godmother to his daughter. Hence the unusual combination of names which she bore.

Mr. Ashton, from being so much about the persons of the king and queen, had received several distinguished marks of favour, among which the queen of James II. condescended to stand sponsor for his daughter, naming her after herself. He also received a silver and oak snuff-box made out of the Boscobel oak, which I have in my possession; the clock which was made for King Charles which strikes according to the Roman figures, a large bell striking for every V and a small one for every I; this was owing to the king's disliking the length of time that common clocks were striking; a cabinet belonging to the same, and (a small piece of) the ribbon of the Garter which the royal sufferer wore at his execution; also a picture of the Pretender.¹

Mrs. Ashton's after career was short and sad. She retired with her two surviving children to St. Germain's,

¹ From some additions made to my grandfather's *Parentalia* by his cousin, Mr. Edward Beaumont Venn. This Mr. Venn, as being descended from Dr. Edward Venn, Richard Venn's eldest son, came into possession of these interesting family memorials. They are now (1903) in possession of his daughter, Miss Venn of Preston, near Ipswich. Besides the articles mentioned above, there is an old chair given to Miss Ashton by Queen Mary. The portraits of Mr. and Mrs. John Ashton, as will be noticed subsequently, were left to a grand-daughter and have disappeared.

hoping for some sympathy and relief from the late King James, in whose service her husband had died; but she seems to have been informed that unless she joined the Church of Rome no help would be given her. Her son¹ James, it is said, was (nominally) created a baronet by James; he died very young. Mrs. Ashton died about 1695; it is not known where, but probably at St. Germain's.

The daughter with the many names, after her mother's death, was brought up by her uncle and guardian Mr. Richard Rigby at Mistley, near Colchester.² As the sole survivor of her family she inherited a fortune amounting to £4000.

In the fatal year of infatuation, 1720,³ Mr. Rigby employed this in the purchase of South Sea Stock, and by the sudden fall of that stock it was of course nearly all lost. This event was the cause of a rupture between the two families which was never afterwards healed. This Mr. Rigby was the father of the late Paymaster-General. Whether compunction of conscience was the cause, I know not, but Mr. Rigby built several almshouses, and bequeathed several charitable legacies. Her father's plate, etc., Mr. Rigby took possession of for her, but she never recovered it. A singular circumstance occurred to my great-grandfather (Mr. E. B. Venn says) after he had married Miss Ashton. A gentleman, perfectly a stranger, called upon Mr. Venn and asked him if he did not marry Miss Ashton; answered in the affirmative, he told him there was a large property belonging to her, but he feared the greater part was irretrievably lost; but if he would call on such a gentleman in such a set of chambers in the Temple, he would be enabled through him to recover a part. The gentleman took his leave, and Mr. Venn, following his advice, obtained something handsome. . . . Party spirit ran so high that even Mr. Ashton's infants were not secure in the house of their uncle, Mr. Rigby, at Mistley Hall; for, being there, a party of soldiers sought them, I am informed, and they, being concealed by the tapestry, a soldier thrust through some part of the tapestry to try

¹ He was presumably the third son. Two others, John and Edward, had been buried in 1686 and 1689. Mary was born June 27, 1689, and was therefore not two years old at the time of her father's death. I suppose she was baptized at one of the royal chapels, but I cannot find the entry in such of the registers as begin early enough.

² Edward Rigby bought the estate of Mistley, with other property in the neighbourhood, of the last Earl of Oxford. His grandson, the well-known member of Parliament, paymaster, etc., inherited it.

³ If this date is correct, Miss Ashton was already married, and Mr. Rigby must therefore have been one of her trustees.



The North West Prospect of the Parochial Church of St. Antholin in the City of London.

ST. ANTHOLIN'S CHURCH, LONDON.

Since destroyed.

if they were there, but providentially not at the part where they were concealed.¹

Mr. Venn's clerical career was entirely spent in London. He was ordained deacon by the Bishop of London, at the chapel in Fulham Palace, Sept. 23, 1716; and priest, at the chapel in Somerset House,² Dec. 2, 1717. He acted at first as curate to Dr. Thomas Bennet, rector of St. Giles', Cripplegate, and soon became acquainted with Bishop Hare; Dr. Gibson, afterwards Bishop of London; Dr. William Berriman, rector of St. Andrew Undershaft; Dr. Stebbing; Dr. Battie; and other learned divines of the city. He was appointed, May 25, 1725, to the important living of St. Antholin's,³ Watling Street, at the rectory house of which he lived during his residence in London. He also held the sinecure post of clerk in orders of St. Giles', Cripplegate, worth about £130 a year; and was preacher at St. Paul's Cross for some time. "By what interest he obtained these I am not informed, but as they are in the gift of the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's, I presume it to have been through Bishop Gibson's interest." By far the most intimate of his friends at this time was Henry Temple, the first Lord Palmerston, great-grandfather of the late premier, with whom he regularly dined once a week when in town. It was this friendship which made him select Barnes as his place of residence in summer, owing to its proximity to

¹ As regards these and following personal anecdotes, it must be remembered that my grandfather, John Venn, began his family inquiries as a mere youth when several of his older relatives were surviving. His grandmother, Mary Venn (Miss Ashton), did not die till 1762, at which time his father, Henry Venn, from whom most of his particulars would be obtained, was thirty-seven years of age, and his uncles, Edward and Richard, were respectively forty-five and forty-four.

² Somerset House then belonged to the Crown, but was little used except to entertain ambassadors or other distinguished persons. The present building is, of course, entirely modern.

³ St. Antholin's was one of Wren's churches. With this parish was combined that of St. John the Baptist, Walbrook. Both of the churches had of course been destroyed in the great Fire, but the latter had not been rebuilt. When St. Antholin's was removed a few years ago, about the time of the making of Queen Victoria Street, the two parishes were united with St. Mary Aldermary. "The old rectory house adjoined the church on the north side. It was pulled down when Queen Victoria Street was made. The church itself was afterwards taken down, and the site fetched the sum of £47,000. A new St. Antholin's was built out of the proceeds, at Peckham Rye, and various other suburban churches have been partly paid for out of the surplus" (information from Canon L. B. White, the present rector).

Sheen, where Lord Palmerston had a house¹ for some time. So frequent was his residence there that no less than five of his children are entered in the parish register as having been baptized at Barnes.

With the exception of one incident, to be presently noticed, which brought him suddenly into public notice, and involved him in a storm of pamphlets, laudatory and denunciatory, he led the studious but active life of one of those London clergy whom Macaulay so sharply contrasts with the bulk of their country brethren. In Theology he belonged to the old-fashioned High Church party. Politically, he may at first have had a leaning towards the Jacobites—sympathies which probably led to his acquaintance with the daughter of John Ashton, and were not likely to be diminished by his marriage with her—but he nevertheless became reconciled to the party in power at a somewhat early date. It should be stated, however, that any such change of views led to neither wealth nor dignity, his only known patron being Bishop Gibson, who was by no means in favour with those in power.

Though he would not go so far as to assert that Salvation was only to be obtained within the pale of the Episcopal Church, yet he would say that Dissenters had nothing to trust to but the uncovenanted mercy of God. Wherever the interests of the Church were concerned, his whole soul was interested, and he was amongst the most forward in taking decisive measures in her behalf. He was the first clergyman in London who refused Mr. Whitefield his pulpit, and who wrote against the rising sect of the Methodists. Mr. Whitefield, in consequence, desired an interview with him, which was readily granted. At the conclusion of a long conversation my grandfather said to him, 'Mr. Whitefield, I give you credit for the purity of your intentions, and your zeal in the service of God, but I think you are under a delusion, and likely to do much mischief. I therefore esteem it my duty to oppose you, and I therefore shall oppose you. At the same time I hope that if I am wrong in my opposition God will not suffer me to persist in it.' Very soon after this interview Mr. Venn died, and Mr. Whitefield, not much to the credit of either his judgment or liberality, remarked in his *Journal* on the interference of Providence, which had so soon shown him who

¹ Temple Grove, in the upper part of Mortlake, near the entrance to Richmond Park. For many years now the house has been used as a large preparatory school.

was right, and removed him from the power of opposing any more.

I have not the least doubt that my grandfather obtained this anecdote indirectly from Whitefield himself, who was for many years, in later times, an intimate personal friend and frequent associate of his father, Henry Venn. The incident must have occurred at the very beginning of Whitefield's career. He was ordained deacon (at the age of twenty-one) on Trinity Sunday, 1736, and left for Georgia in December 1737, being in London for only a few months during this period. Whitefield himself presumably refers to the circumstances as follows :—"Two clergymen sent for me and told me they would not let me preach in their pulpits any more, unless I renounced that part of the Preface of my Sermon on Regeneration . . ." This is under the date of about October 1737. The uncharitable judgment referred to is as follows ; it was written in his Journal almost immediately after his first return to England from Georgia.

Feb. 19, 1738-9.—Amongst the letters I received from religious correspondents one writes to me thus, "Mr.—, who wrote that letter in the *Miscellany*, died yesterday. He is now gone to give an account of the many hard speeches contained therein, and is convinced that orthodoxy in notions is not the only religion." This letter in the *Miscellany* was written by Mr. Venn a very few days before his death. It contains the statement that Whitefield had secured the use of the pulpit at St Margaret's, Westminster, by the device of having the regular preacher locked up in his pew. This, he says, he had on the authority of the clergyman who read the prayers. Whitefield's explanation is that he was escorted to the pulpit by the sexton or verger, and supposed that the preacher had voluntarily given way to him. It seems clear that in the early days of Methodism peculiar ways were sometimes adopted to secure admission to the pulpits of those clergy who were supposed to be hostile to the movement. Mr. Venn says, "One of these I attest upon my own knowledge, because it was attempted upon myself by some of Mr. Whitefield's followers who knew that I would not grant him the pulpit upon any terms ; and that is, by asking the pulpit for a friend, and then sending Mr. Whitefield or some other Methodist. Another has been by stepping up into the pulpit as soon as the prayers are over, without asking any leave at all."—*Weekly Miscellany*, Feb. 10, 1738-9.

Richard Venn's private character is very candidly summed up as follows by his grandson :—

In reviewing my grandfather's character we shall perceive much to admire and something to censure. His defects were principally those which arise from pushing good principles to excess. His natural temper was warm and zealous, and his conduct therefore energetic, nor could he form a conception of that lukewarmness which keeps to itself its principles and takes no pains to justify and propagate them. His health was also remarkably firm, having never known till his last illness what even a headache was. His character therefore was strongly marked, and he was endowed by nature with a perseverance and firmness which rendered him capable of great and successful exertions. He possessed a most intrepid spirit, having never, as he once said, felt upon any occasion the sensation of fear. His nerves were also so firm that he was never known to shed tears but upon two occasions : once when Mr. Temple, son of Lord Palmerston, whom Dr. Young celebrated in his *Night Thoughts* under the name of Philander, a most highly accomplished and excellent young man,¹ died ; and another time when the Mortmain Act was passed in 1736, by which the devise of lands for charitable and ecclesiastical uses was much restrained.

Of his personal courage the following anecdote is recorded :—

He once hired a man-servant who, a few days after his coming into the family, excited by his conduct some suspicions in the maidservants concerning his character, being observed after it was dark to go out several times and converse with strangers of a suspicious appearance. At night he refused to go to bed. The maids communicated their suspicions to my grandfather, who was then gone to bed. He instantly rose, and requiring the man to go to bed, and receiving a surly answer, he seized him by the collar and compelled him to go upstairs. He stood by him till he was undressed, and then, taking away all his clothes and locking him into his room, he retired. During the night repeated whistlings and calls were heard, but it was shown that the family were awake. The man was afterwards discovered to have been associated with a band of house-breakers.

“In the education of his children he combined the natural firmness and decisiveness of his temper with much affection. He was, indeed, absolute in his power, and no

¹ His illness, perhaps, is referred to here. His death occurred a few months after that of Mr. Venn.

child durst presume to manifest the least opposition to his will. The system of Solomon he preferred to that of Rousseau. He always required an absolute and instant obedience. Upon any heinous offence the delinquent was secluded from the family, and the rest of the children and servants forbidden in the strictest manner to hold any communication with them. In the evening it was the custom, according to the venerable and patriarchal mode prevalent in that day, for all the children to kneel before their father and ask his blessing before they retired to rest. The delinquent was allowed to join the rest and enter the parlour, but if his punishment was not thought to have been carried to a sufficient extent he was immediately on his entrance ordered back to his confinement with a peremptory, Begone ; and he knew that at least another day must elapse before he could be admitted into favour. If, on the contrary, the time of his suffering was expired he was allowed to approach with the rest, and after a solemn and affectionate address in which the evil of his conduct was strikingly laid open, he received with the rest the paternal kiss and benediction. Yet with all this strictness his children loved him with as fervent an affection as they honoured him with a profound reverence. I can myself bear testimony to the ardour with which they were wont to speak of his memory."

An illustration of his inflexibility of will is given in the *Life* of his son Henry :—

There was a small court between St. Antholin's Church and that part of the rectory house in which his father's study was situated. This had been roofed and tiled over ; and here he used to play, when he was able to say his lessons, till his father was able to hear him. One day, being perfect in his lesson, he as usual asked leave to play, but was refused. As this leave had rarely before been denied, and his father did not appear to be at leisure to hear him, he concluded that his request had been misunderstood, and again asked permission to play ; but was immediately and peremptorily refused. Soon after, his mother came into the room, and seeing him looking out of the window, whilst his father appeared deeply engaged in writing, she asked of her own accord whether he might not be allowed to play ; but her request was also refused. She thought this extraordinary, but

her surprise was changed into astonishment and gratitude when, a few minutes afterwards, the whole roof fell in, and would have crushed the child to death had he been playing there. His father acknowledged that he had no particular reason at the moment for his refusal ; but having once refused, thought it proper to persist in doing so.

In my grandfather's original notes for the *Parentalia* he says of Richard Venn's management of his children, "If challenged or attacked by other boys, he would lead them out, and stand by to see them fight it out."

He was perhaps scarcely sufficiently sensible of the original difference of character in children, and therefore expected all his children to be as intrepid and as firm as himself. Finding that his daughter was afraid of spirits, after endeavouring to convince her how groundless her fears were, he obliged her to go by the light of the moon into the church (St. Antholin's), which stood at a little distance from his house, and bring him a book from the reading-desk on the evening of a day on which a corpse had been interred in the aisle through which she would have to pass. In like manner he would not suffer his children to have an aversion to any kind of food, and his daughter having expressed a dislike to a particular sort, he suffered no other food to be brought to table till hunger compelled her to eat it, and till by perseverance her dislike to it was effectually subdued.

It may be remarked that this man of iron nerve, who had no sympathy with the timid sensibility of a child, himself fell a victim to what many persons would regard as an attack of sheer nervous apprehension. The circumstances were as follows :—

A Mrs. Boehm had a servant in her house ill of the smallpox as was thought, though afterwards there was reason to doubt whether it was that disease. Mrs. Boehm having on that account absented herself from church for several Sundays, my grandfather sent her a message that she might now return as usual to public worship, there being no longer any danger of communicating infection. She accordingly came on the following Sunday, and passed by the reading-desk in which Mr. Venn was, in the way to her pew. Upon her passing him he was sensible of an uncommon and very disagreeable smell ; and as soon as he came out of the church he said to his wife, "I am sure I have caught the smallpox." In whatever way he caught it, certain it is that in a few days he sickened, and had the disease in a fatal degree.

He was buried at St. Antholin's, Feb. 20, 1738-9.

During the last few years of his life his name was brought into great prominence, and he himself incurred much obloquy, by his firmness on a matter of principle. The case was this. The Bishopric of Gloucester having become vacant in Dec. 1733, the Chancellor, Lord Talbot, petitioned for it in favour of his intimate friend Dr. Rundle. Rundle was an able and well-known man, but a strong Latitudinarian, or "Broad Churchman" as he would be called at the present time, and known to be intimate not only with Arians like Whiston, but with Deists like Chubb. Dr. Gibson, Bishop of London, was strongly opposed to the appointment, but had nothing to act upon until Mr. Venn came forward and declared that he would appear publicly in Bow Church and oppose the confirmation, if the appointment were really carried on. The ground of this objection was some remarks that Mr. Venn had heard Dr. Rundle make in a conversation upon the sacrifice of Isaac, to the effect that "had he been a justice of the peace at that time he should have thought it his duty to have laid Abraham by the heels, as a knave or a madman."

Dr. Rundle had several powerful supporters,¹ and a considerable pamphlet controversy ensued, upon the news that such opposition would be resorted to. One of the most active of these supporters was Dr A. Ashley Sykes,² who wrote under the designation of "a Gentleman of the Temple." It was made a subject of bitter complaint that a private conversation, and one dating back thirteen years, should thus be dragged into public notice. To this Mr. Venn replied that, so far as he was concerned, he had made no secrecy,³ that he had before now endeavoured to

¹ In the *London Magazine* for July 1735 is a letter from Conyers Middleton to Mr. Venn (it is addressed to "Mr. V—," and signed "C. M.") beginning, "Sir, I have been well informed that, some time ago, in Mr. Inny's shop, you took the liberty to call me by name an *Apostate priest*. . . ." The letter is written in a very severe tone, and concludes, "should I chance to describe a certain priest by the title of the *Accuser*, there is scarce a man in England who would not think on Mr. V—." The allusion here is, of course, to his recent threatened action in the matter of Dr. Rundle.

² A well-known Latitudinarian clergyman of the day, assistant minister at St. James', Westminster, and prebendary of Worcester. Author of many controversial tracts.

³ His grandson records a family tradition to the effect that Mr. Venn had immediately sent distinct notice to Dr. Rundle that he should oppose any future attempt to raise him to a bishopric whenever any such attempt should be made.

secure public condemnation of these opinions, and that this was the first opportunity that he had had.

Bishop Gibson himself naturally incurred obloquy for his resolute opposition to the Chancellor's wish, and it was always understood that it was entirely owing to this opposition that he was rejected for the Primacy. As public objection at the ceremony of Confirmation would have entailed scandal, strenuous efforts were made to induce Mr. Venn to give way. His son Henry—he was then a boy of between eight and nine—was present at one interview which left an indelible impression on his mind.

Some one called, on behalf of the Chancellor it was understood, and hinted strongly on what might ensue if he would remain quiet: the Deanery of Wells, it was stated, would probably soon be vacant. On the other hand, if he remained obstinate the consequences might be serious. Mr. Venn's reply was to the effect that if his wife had to become a needle-woman, and his son a water-man, he would still persist.

The see of Gloucester was kept vacant for about a year, by which time the matter had acquired much public notoriety, and many others of the clergy had begun to express their objection to the proposed appointment. Eventually the matter was compromised by Dr. Rundle being appointed to an Irish bishopric, namely, that of Derry.

Mr. Venn's zeal and combativeness brought him into conflict with several of the Latitudinarian, or, as they would now be called, Broad Church clergy. One of these opponents was Dr. Conyers Middleton, a well-known Cambridge scholar.

He had published remarks on Waterland's answer to Tindal's Deistical work entitled *Christianity as old as Creation*, in which positions were advanced which seemed to shake the credit of Christianity itself. His name was not put to the tract, nor was it known for some time who was the author. At length he was discovered to have written it, as well as several other tracts against Dr. Pearce, who had attacked it. Mr. Venn, happening, in Inny's shop, a place of great resort amongst the clergy of that day, to be asked his opinion with respect to Dr. Middleton, replied with his usual openness and boldness, "I think he is an apostate priest."

These words were carried to Dr. Middleton, who at that time had not renounced the expectation of preferment. He therefore addressed and published a most severe letter to my grandfather. This was not the only occasion on which his warm and zealous temper led him into conduct which was justly reprehensible.

Another of his antagonists was the redoubtable Dr. Warburton, though in his case, as Sir L. Stephen has remarked, it was not necessary to have attacked his opinions in order to draw down his hostility; to have supported them on other grounds than he had himself advanced was quite enough to bring on a savage attack upon the well-meaning ally. The following extracts will show how the great theological pugilist treated those whom he despised.

What think you of our new set of Fanatics? . . . There is another of them, one Wesley. . . . He told a friend of mine that he will return to Georgia, and then will cast off his English dress, and wear a dried skin like the savages. It would be well for Virtue and Religion if this humour would lay hold generally of our over-heated bigots, and send them to cool themselves in the Indian marshes. I fancy that Venn and Webster would make a very entertaining as well as proper figure in a couple of bear-skins and marching in this terror of equipage like the Pagan priests of Hercules of old.—Letter to Mr. P. des Maizeaus, September 16, 1738; in Nichols' *Lit. Anecdotes*, v. 167.

Again—

. . . There is a long preface to it (Faith working by Charity) in which I work Venn and Webster¹ in a manner, though not equal to the highest provocation that ever was given, yet that they will have no reason to say that I sneak to them in an unorthodox manner. The truth is I find gentleness does but make them insult the more. I have now tried them another way, and will not leave them.—Letter to Rev. Mr. Birch, May 27, 1738; in Nichols' *Literary Anecdotes*, v. 578.

Mr. Venn's zeal for the Church was not confined to the Establishment in general. In the case of individual clergy he always showed himself remarkably generous

¹ William Webster, D.D., a learned and multifarious writer, who held more than one living in the London diocese. He was curate at St. Clement's, Eastcheap, for some years from 1732. In this capacity, and as editor of the *Weekly Miscellany*, he would naturally make the acquaintance of Mr. Venn, who frequently wrote in this journal.

wherever anything like distress or want existed. In fact his donations were sometimes so liberal that he was remonstrated with by friends on the ground that he was prejudicing the natural claims of his own family.

Many letters from him must have been in existence at some time; but rather strange to say, considering the care with which my grandfather preserved every scrap of family information, we do not possess a fragment from his hand, in the way either of letter, diary, or memorandum. The following letter, from Cole's Collections at the British Museum, is the only one of his letters which I have seen. It is prefaced "Extracts and copies of Original letters and papers . . . lent to me by my worthy friend Dr. Zachary Grey,¹ June 1, 1759; being autographs of many eminent persons." It is published in Nichols' *Illustrations of Literary History*, iv. 375.

To the Rev. Dr. Grey at his house in Cambridge.

ST. ANTHOLIN'S, May 29, 1736.

Dear Sir—I heartily thank you for your kind present, which I received from Mr. Clark, your bookseller. Your piece² is not only an answer to Neale, but in a good measure will serve as an antidote to Rapin and such other writers as have contributed to poison the youth of the nation with prejudices against the Church of England and the Stuart family. As the business of the town is over, and I am retiring into the country, I intend to get your answer³ to Sir Isaac and entertain myself with that. I hope if you come to London this summer you will not think seven miles too far to let me have your company at Barnes. Things are at present so unsettled that there is very little news to send you that may be depended upon. The Bishop of L——⁴ is quite out of court, and the Bishop of Oxford succeeds him both in the present Church Administration and also in his view to Canterbury. I congratulate you upon the defeat of the Quakers, but as that victory is allayed by the Mortmain Act, I doubt we may

¹ Zachary Grey was vicar of Houghton Conquest, Bedfordshire, but resided much at Cambridge. He was in constant communication with many of the learned clergy of his day. Most of his writings, which were of a very miscellaneous character, were published anonymously.

² Zachary Grey wrote "An Impartial Examination of the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Vols. of Mr. Daniel Neale's *History of the Puritans*," 1736-9.

³ "Examination of the 14th Chapter of Sir Isaac Newton's *Observations upon . . . Daniel*," 1736. It was published anonymously.

⁴ The Bishop of London was Dr. Edward Gibson, the friend of Mr. Venn already mentioned. The Bishop of Oxford was Dr. John Potter.

say, if Pyrrhus goes on to beat the Romans at this rate he will be undone shortly. We are now thinking of sending Master Bryan¹ to Cambridge, but the favour you have procured him at Trinity Hall can't take place, as we understand, till next Christmas. There is a Rustat Exhibition vacant we hear at Jesus: could your interest with the master serve him to be his sizar at the next vacancy? The boy is a good scholar, and his father was an honest and a learned man; and I am sure you love to assist persons who both want and deserve your assistance. Pray be so kind as to visit Dr. Ashton,² and inform yourself whether any further provision of any kind beside the Rustat Exhibition can be hoped for from that College. You may also acquaint the doctor that the living³ I have to dispose of near Colchester waits the resolution of their College till I think of selling it elsewhere. Pray be as speedy as you can in returning an answer to your faithful, humble servant,

R. VENN.

Direct to Mr. Edward Venn at St. Antholin's, London.

Cole appends the following note:—

This Mr. Venn was the person who informed Bp. Gibson of Dr. Rundle's infidel and indecent speeches when he was going to be made Bp. of Gloucester, and who prevented his being preferred to that see and was sent into Ireland: on which account Mr. Venn was not a little pelted at by the writers at that time. Bp. Gibson, at this time, for his unspotted integrity and adhering too strictly to the rights of the Church, was disgraced, and Potter, who really afterwards succeeded to Canterbury . . . (the rest about Potter).

Mr. Venn did not, strictly speaking, publish anything during his life, though a number of more or less controversial letters written by him appeared in the *Weekly Miscellany*, at that time conducted by his friend Dr. W. Webster. After his death a volume of Tracts and Sermons, composed by him, was published by his widow in 1740. It was issued by subscription. "It received a liberal encouragement, and produced many instances of attach-

¹ Edward Bryan, B.A. at Jesus, 1739, M.A. 1744. His father, Augustin Bryan, of Trinity College, was a well-known scholar, editor of *Plutarch's Lives*, etc., in which capacity he had probably made Mr. Venn's acquaintance.

² Charles Ashton, Master of Jesus College. He was no connection with the Ashtons of Penketh.

³ I cannot ascertain what living is here referred to. It probably came into his possession through his wife, as both her father, Ashton, and her uncle, Rigby, owned property in that part of Essex.

ment and respect to his memory." The following are the contents :—

1. King George's Title asserted : or a Letter to a Fellow of a College in Cambridge ; showing the Lawfulness of the Oaths required by the present Government, upon Principles equally received by all Parties. Written in the Year 1715.

The Letter is a long one, extending to over one hundred pages, and must therefore, one would think, have been composed with a view to publication. It appears that the "Fellow" (? Thomas Baker) to whom it was addressed was contemplating the loss of his Fellowship, by his refusal to take the oath. The writer undertakes to establish the following propositions :—

- (1) That at the time of the Resolution the *Chevalier's* birth was doubted of by the English nation.
- (2) That on that occasion the States of the Realm had power to determine the controversy about the succession.
- (3) That the determination then made still remains in force though the States were at that time mistaken in their opinion of the *Chevalier's* birth.

On the first of these points he does not give his own opinion, but it looks as if he doubted the legitimacy. His subsequent marriage with John Ashton's daughter may have changed his views. The second point is supported by numerous quotations from Grotius and Puffendorf. On none of the points does he claim more than probability, his general conclusion being that "such probabilities of Right, joined with actual Possession, make the possessor to become rightful and lawful King." It was written at a critical date at Cambridge, for it was in this year that the Act was passed requiring that all members of every foundation should take the oaths of allegiance to the existing Government—the act which caused the resignation of Thomas Baker, the antiquary, together with twenty-one other Fellows of St. John's.

2. The Debate about the Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts briefly summed up and determined. With

some remarks showing that the Repeal of these Acts will never produce *Peace* and *Union* among *Protestants*, as is weakly pretended, but rather prove a constant occasion of *fresh Feuds and Animosities*.

A short tract of twenty pages: not dated, but probably published in or about 1719. He concludes that "if a Test be necessary, is our *Sacramental* Test also defensible? I answer briefly, *Yes*, and upon this Principle, it is lawful to use the Sacrament or any other sacred Rite to any other religious Purpose which it will suit . . . provided it is not *inconsistent* with the Ground and original End for which it was ordained."

3. A series of letters published in the *Weekly Miscellany*,¹ dealing mostly with the supposed spread of Infidelity. One of these contains some minor criticism on certain arguments in Butler's *Analogy*. Another is a defence of his own and Bp. Gibson's action in the matter of Dr. Rundle. The letters were anonymous.
4. A Sermon preached before the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor and Aldermen in the Cathedral Church of St. Paul's, London, on Monday, January 30, 1737. Being the day appointed to be observed as the Day of the Martyrdom of King Charles I.

It is dedicated to the Lord Mayor;² with high praise for his conduct as Member of Parliament, especially for his "Courage and eloquence in a late time of trial" to the Universities. This doubtless refers to the so-called "Mortmain Act" from which the Universities were finally excepted.

5. Sermons on different occasions: namely (1) on Christmas Day; (2) on Whit Sunday; (3) The Eternity of Hell Torments asserted; (4) The necessity of keeping the Whole Law.

¹ The *Weekly Miscellany* was a journal which had a brief existence (1736-8), principally as a medium for clerical communications. It was edited by the Rev. William Webster, D.D., a rather learned and multifarious London clergyman, under the pseudonym "Richard Hooker."

² Sir John Barnard, Lord Mayor 1737, M.P. for the City 1722-61. He was an opponent of Walpole in the matter of the Excise Bill, etc. He was distinguished as a financier in the House of Commons (he was offered the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1746) and for his high personal character. Died at Clapham, 1764.

Richard Venn had eight children; viz., Edward, Richard, Henry, John, Mary, Anne, Jane, and Elizabeth.

1. Edward was born in London in 1717. He was educated at St. Paul's School, London, from whence he went to St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1736. Here he was elected "sub-sacrist," *i.e.* chapel-clerk, July 8, 1737, which office he held until 1744. He also, in 1737, obtained a Gower Exhibition at that College. He graduated B.A. in 1740-1, when his name appears (in the MS. lists at the Registry) as twenty-first out of twenty-eight in the honours list, or Tripos as it is now called. He took his M.A. in 1744.

He studied at Cambridge with great diligence, intending to have taken orders. But, having passed his degrees, some obstacles presented themselves to his mind with regard to subscribing to the Articles of the Church of England. By this I do not mean that he actually left her Communion and attached himself to any other sect, but only inasmuch as related to his becoming a minister. He therefore devoted himself to the study of medicine, and became a pupil of the famous Dr. Heberden: I should suppose he was led to this study from his intimacy with Mr. Battie, the editor of *Isocrates*, who had been a ward of his father.—E. B. V.

After studying for some time in England he went to Leyden, where he became a pupil of the celebrated Boerhave. It was either at Leyden or some other foreign University that he took the degree of M.D., which he certainly held. On returning to England he soon settled in practice at Ipswich, where he remained for the rest of his life. Whatever the early change may have been in his religious opinions, it does not seem to have produced any rupture between him and his brother Henry.¹ The distance between them and their busy lives prevented much mutual intercourse, but such letters from Henry as are preserved show no diminution of affection. He married, at Wherstead, March 17, 1749-50 (licence dated same day), Mary, daughter of Rev. Robert Beaumont,

¹ Henry Venn, writing to his brother-in-law, Brasier, says of him, "He was a man of much thought, and felt a great deal more than he would tell, being of a silent disposition. But he was never weary of learning from me the wonderful change the Lord is working in the souls of men, and if anything interrupted my account he would say, 'Well, but go on Harry, you were saying so and so.' This I was pleased with. Very uncommon it was in a physician."

rector of Witlesham, near Ipswich, by whom he had a son Edward and a daughter Mary. He died at Ipswich, February 13, 1780.

2. Richard, born in London in 1718. He was bred to business, and early in life set up as a silk mercer in London; but, not being successful in this venture, he gave it up while he was able to pay every creditor. Afterwards he entered into the house of Messrs. Car and Ibbetson, of Ludgate Hill, in whose service he continued for nearly the remainder of his life. He retired in 1785. His long and faithful services were recognised by his firm, who sent him annually a handsome gratuity as a mark of their esteem. On his retirement, he went to live with his brother Henry, at his vicarage of Yelling. He was struck with palsy, whilst in church, December 3, 1789, and died at Yelling, September 27, 1791. He was never married. There is a small slab to his memory on the outside of the tower of Yelling church.

3. Mary, baptized at Barnes, March 8, 1720-1. She married, March 31, 1744, Mr. William James Gambier, an eminent tea-broker in London, by whom she had three daughters and one son. She died at Camberwell, April 18, 1791, and was buried in the churchyard there.

4. Anne, baptized at Barnes, August 8, 1722; buried there, August 9, 1729.

5. Henry (see next section).

6. Elizabeth, baptized at Barnes, September 4, 1728; buried there, January 25, 1729-30.

7. John, baptized at Barnes, November 6, 1730; buried there, February 27, 1730-1.

8. Jane, buried at Barnes, January 25, 1729-30.

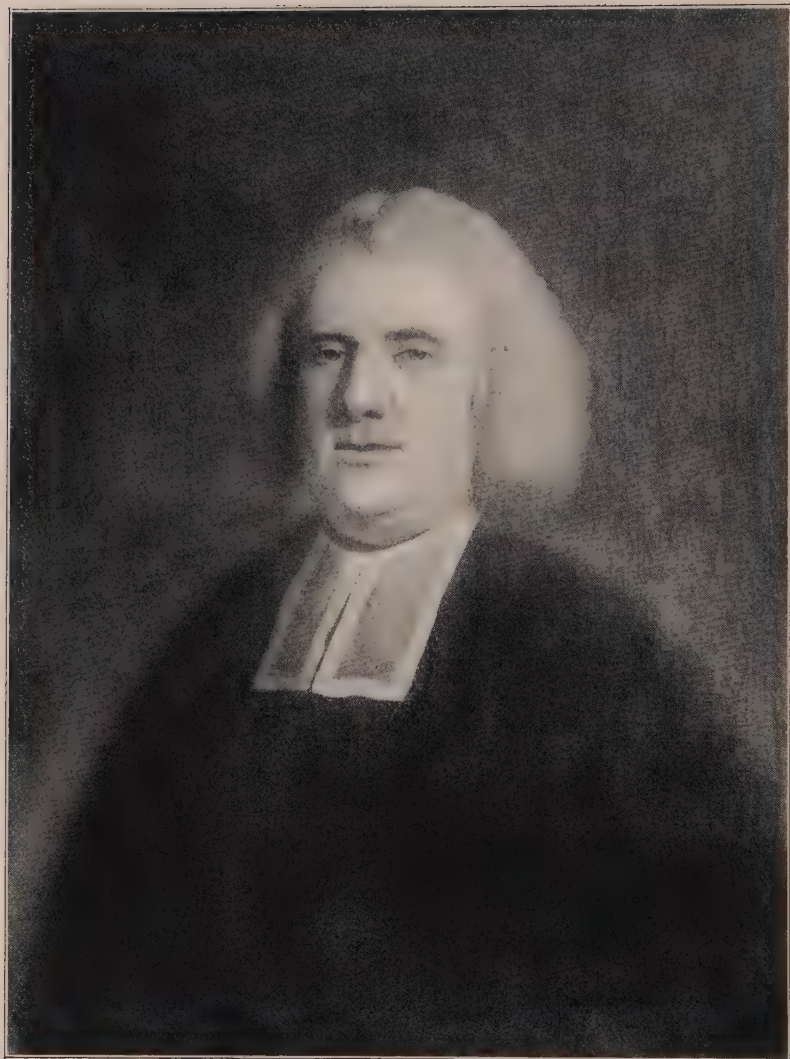
Mr. Venn, probably owing to his comparatively early and sudden death, made no will. His widow took out the administration of his goods, March 8, 1738-9, at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury. The register of St. Antholin's simply records his death as follows: "Feb. 20, 1738-9. The Rev. Mr. Richard Venn bur."

His widow's will is dated December 6, 1757. It was proved (P. C. C.) July 9, 1762. She is therein described

as "of Bread Street, London." She leaves to her sons Edward and Richard, as executors and trustees, all her messuages, lands, etc., in Elmsted, Essex: these they are directed to sell as soon as convenient. Of the proceeds, £440 is to go to Edward; £330 is to be invested for Henry and his children, with various provisions in case of the failure of issue: "My cabinet, and clock, and gold watch, and the pictures of my father and mother, to my daughter Mary Gambier, and I desire the same, after her death, may go to her eldest daughter."

The latter legacies refer to the heirlooms connected with the Stuart family, which she had received through her father, John Ashton. The cabinet and clock are now (1903) in possession of Miss E. G. Venn, of Freston Lodge, near Ipswich. The watch came somehow into possession of my aunt, Emelia Venn, of Hereford; at least she admitted a few years before her death, to my horror, that she had owned it in her younger days, and had sold it for a trifling sum in order to get some money for a Missionary Society. Of the portraits of John and Mary Ashton all trace seems to be lost. Mary Gambier's eldest daughter, Maria, married a Mr. James Wright, and certainly had issue. But after inquiries of her nearest known relations (descendants of Mr. W. J. Gambier), no clue has been found as to the subsequent career of such issue.

According to family (Gambier) tradition, Mrs. Wright and her brother quarrelled over the possession of the pictures, during which time they were left to rot in a coach-house or some such place.



P. 65.

HENRY VENN, M.A.

From Painting by M. Chamberlain, 1770.

HENRY VENN OF HUDDERSFIELD AND YELLING, 1725-1797

HENRY VENN'S biography, consisting principally of a collection of his letters, was commenced by his son John, and completed by his grandson Henry. It was published in 1834, and had at once considerable success, the sixth edition being issued in 1839. The passages in smaller type in the following account, unless otherwise assigned, are taken from this source.

He was born at Barnes, Surrey, his father's usual summer residence, March 2, 1724-5.

He discovered, from a child, such activity and energy of mind, such decision and zeal in whatever he undertook, that all who observed him expected he would one day become an extraordinary character. A few anecdotes of his boyish years will serve to illustrate this.

Whilst he was yet a child, Sir Robert Walpole attempted to introduce more extensively the system of the Excise.¹ A violent opposition was excited, and the popular cry ran strongly against this measure. Our young politician (he was just eight) caught the alarm, and could not sleep in his bed, lest the Excise Bill should pass. On the day on which it was to be submitted to Parliament, his zeal led him to leave his father's house early, and to wander through the streets, crying "No Excise," till the evening, when he returned home exhausted with fatigue, and with his voice totally lost with his patriotic exertions.

A gentleman, who was reputed to be an Arian, called one

¹ The bill was thrown out, March 14, 1732-3. The scheme is now universally considered to have been a wise one, as tending to simplify the system of taxation in the country. The clamour, however, against it—mainly raised by political opponents and those interested in existent abuses—was so violent that it was rejected (for an account see *Lord Hervey's Memoirs*, i. 178). In reference to this, and other early anecdotes, it may be remarked that John Venn was nearly forty when his father died, and had from boyhood been a collector of family information. He had also uncles and aunts who could abundantly supply him with anecdotes of his father's early years.

day upon his father. The child (for such he then was) came into the room, and with a grave countenance earnestly surveyed him. The gentleman,¹ observing the notice which the child took of him, began to show him some civil attentions, but found all his friendly overtures sternly rejected. At length, upon his more earnestly soliciting him to come to him, the boy indignantly replied, "I will not come near you, for you are an Arian."

As he adopted with all his heart the opinions he imbibed, he early entertained a most vehement dislike of all Dissenters. It happened that a dissenting minister's son, two or three years older than himself, lived in the same street in London with his father; and young Henry, in his zeal for the Church, made no scruple to attack and fight² this seceder from it, whenever he met him. It was a curious circumstance, that, many years afterwards, he became acquainted with this very individual who was then a dissenting minister; and who confessed to him how much he had been the terror of his life; and acknowledged that he never durst leave his father's door till he had carefully looked on every side, to see that this young champion of the Church was not in the street.

It could scarcely be expected that such vehemence of mind would be restrained within due bounds; it accordingly increased into an inordinate ambition, attended, as is usually the case, with the fever of impatient jealousy. A singular instance of this was exhibited upon his hearing a gentleman very highly commend the Latin exercises of his elder brother Edward (then at St. Paul's School). His passions were so agitated by this commendation, that, though he suppressed them so far as to conceal his jealousy, his exertion to do so actually threw him into a convulsion fit, to the great alarm of the family.

I mention these incidents merely to show the strong feelings and decision of character which he inherited from nature. He possessed powers which could not but be active; but how these powers should be determined, whether to good or evil, remained yet a question. Great energy of character is a dangerous quality; it is a power which must do much good or much evil. Hence, Dr. Gloucester Ridley, after attentively observing his character when young, said, "This boy will go up Holborn, and either

¹ Not improbably William Whiston, who was certainly a friend of his father, in spite of his opinions. Whiston says of Mr. Venn, in his *Memoirs*, "one that I was well acquainted with, and had a good opinion of also."

² As we have already seen, Richard Venn was by no means averse to his sons duly and properly defending themselves with their fists.

stop at Ely Place (the then palace of the Bishop of Ely) or go on to Tyburn."

Happily his energy was exercised in a right direction.

His generous kindness and affection were equally conspicuous; and he had a natural frankness and vivacity of manner which won upon all who knew him; so that he was soon the favourite, not only of his parents, but of his brothers, of the servants, and of the whole neighbourhood.

In the year 1737, being twelve years old, he was sent to school at Mortlake, a neighbouring village to Barnes, at which he remained two years. From this school he was removed to the care of Mr. Croft,¹ of Fulham; where he had not been long before his father died (February 16, 1738-9), and he was deprived of the benefits which he would have derived from the care and superintendence of a pious, affectionate, and learned parent.

He continued at Mr. Croft's several months after his father's death, and his quitting this situation was at his own request—a request which indicated an energy of mind, and a right turn of thinking, uncommon in a boy of fourteen. He told his mother that, though he was treated with the highest degree of tenderness at Mr. Croft's, yet the very indulgence which was shown to him and the rest of the boys was an impediment to their improvement. He requested her, therefore, to send him to a school where the discipline was more strict, and where the chief stress was laid upon improvement in learning; for he considered even severity to be preferable, on this account, to too much indulgence.

Such a school was found at the Rev. Mr. Catcott's, of Bristol, author of a treatise on the Deluge,² and other tracts. He was a man of remarkable strictness, and even sternness of discipline, imposing large tasks upon his pupils, and very sparing in his commendations. I, however, always heard my father speak of him with the highest respect. He gained his master's good opinion, by great diligence and by a steady desire of improvement; so that he never once suffered correction from him, or incurred his displeasure.

¹ Rev. Thomas Croft (probably B.A., of Jesus College, 1704). Fulham Academy was a well-known school for many years, and, under the name of Burlington House School, continued in existence till 1853. It was established in 1728. Thomas Pennant, the naturalist and antiquary, was one of the most distinguished alumni of the school; being only a year younger than H. Venn, he was not improbably a contemporary scholar there.

² This seems an error. The Master of Bristol Grammar School was the Rev. Alexander Stopford Catcott, a learned divine and author. It was his son, Rev. Alexander Catcott, also of Bristol, who wrote on the Deluge; *i.e.* he composed what would now be called a geological treatise in support of the Mosaic account of the Flood (*v.* D.N.B.).

I know not what occasioned his removal from Mr. Catcott's, where he continued about a year; but in 1741 he was placed at the Rev. Dr. Pitman's Academy, Market Street, Hertfordshire, where he finished his school education.¹

In June 1742, being seventeen years of age, he was admitted at St. John's College, Cambridge, where his elder brother Edward had already resided for some years. But having obtained a Rustat Scholarship² at Jesus College, he was removed there August 24, where he remained for seven years.

Going to College with the advantage of an acquaintance already established with several respectable members of the University, who had been intimate friends of his father, and having also a brother who had been resident there upwards of five years, he was soon surrounded by a numerous circle of friends. These he increased by qualities which made his company much sought after; namely, a never-failing fund of high spirits, a natural hilarity and gaiety of manner, an engaging sweetness of temper, and a memory stored with anecdotes, which he related in a manner peculiarly interesting. Besides this, he captivated all whose good opinion he wished to gain, by a delicate attention, arising from a happy mixture of benevolence, modesty, and respect; there were therefore, perhaps, very few men in the University who were so generally esteemed and beloved. He was, however, very select in the choice of his society, never keeping company either with profligate men or with persons of mean talents. The rule he laid down was to be acquainted only with those from whom he could gain improvement.

We know nothing of his studies at College. But it is evident that he must have been well grounded in the classics at school, and have carried on his work at College in a very effectual manner, to retain his acquaintance with the Greek and Latin languages in the way he did in later life. Many years afterwards, the interval having been

¹ The school at Market, or Markyate Street, near Potton, was a small old endowed school (*v. Cussans, Herts, iii. 117*). It was here probably that H. Venn acquired his sound classical knowledge, as the Master, Dr. William Pitman, was a Fellow of King's College and a good scholar. He published a Latin Grammar, edited Ovid, etc. He held the chapelry at Market Street, and also the vicarage at Kensworth, Herts. The poet Cowper may have been Venn's schoolfellow here, as he left it for Westminster in 1741, the same year that Venn entered. It was at this school that he suffered the tyranny which sank so deep into his mind.

² A Rustat Scholarship was then worth about £15 a year to a student who resided tolerably continuously, as most scholars, especially the poorer ones, then did. During his last four years he also held a Gatford Exhibition, open to the orphans of clergymen.

almost entirely devoted to exhausting ministerial work, he was able to prepare his son for College during the year or two after he had left school. Those who have, in their later years, been appealed to by their sons to help them in their studies, will realise that a good deal is implied by the ability to give a youth of eighteen systematic assistance, not merely in the Greek Testament, but in Horace and Longinus, in Herodotus and Demosthenes. That his son was well prepared is shown by the satisfactory way in which he passed his entrance examination at College.

What place Henry Venn attained in the Tripos List of 1744-5, the year in which he graduated B.A., we cannot say, as the "order of merit" of that year has been lost. But he evidently took honours, for, in a letter to his son in after years, he says, "I was exceedingly wretched for a time that I was not before Dr. Conyers¹ in honour." In 1747 he was appointed by Dr. Battie² to one of the University Scholarships which he had just founded, and the nomination to which he reserved to himself during his life. This enabled him to stay on for a time in Cambridge. Just before the time of taking the M.A. degree (*i.e.* March 18, 1748-9) he migrated to Queens' College, where a few days afterwards he was elected to a Fellowship, "chiefly through the recommendation of Mr. Owen Manning, the tutor of Queens'," who had formed an intimate friendship with him. He would have been chosen Fellow of his own College—Jesus—had there been a vacancy during the time he was capable of holding that station. He was elected at Queens', March 30, 1749, and continued in residence there about two years and a half. During the latter part of this time he held the offices of Lecturer in Geometry³ and in Greek. He obtained leave of absence, January 11, 1750-1, which was

¹ Richard Conyers, LL.D., of Jesus College, a contemporary and an intimate and life-long friend of Venn, and, like himself, an earnest Evangelical in after life. He was vicar of Helmsley, Yorkshire, for many years.

² Dr. William Battie had been a ward of his father. He was son of Edward Battie, the rector of Holbeton, Devon, who (as we have seen, p. 25) gave Mr. Walker information about the earlier Richard Venn, the vicar of Otterton.

³ *Praelector geometricus* and *praelector graecus*. Whether the duties of such offices had by then fallen into abeyance, it is impossible to say. But from the analogy of other Colleges it seems probable that they were almost, if not entirely, nominal.

annually renewed until 1757, in which year he married, and of course resigned the Fellowship.

On June 17, 1747, he was ordained deacon by Dr. Gibson, Bishop of London, in the chapel of Fulham Palace, without a title, from the respect which the bishop entertained for his father's memory. It will be remembered that Dr. Gibson had been one of Richard Venn's intimate friends, and his principal supporter in his resistance to Dr. Rundle's appointment to a bishopric. Mr. Venn was ordained priest by the Bishop of Ely, Dr. Gooch, in Caius Chapel, June 18, 1749. Dr. Gooch was at that time Master of Caius, and frequently held his ordinations in his own College chapel rather than at Ely.

It was about the time of his entering into Holy Orders that his first religious impressions commenced; and as the life of a retired and pious clergyman, distinguished neither by rank nor preferment nor by interesting incidents, can be useful only by tracing accurately his religious progress, it is to this part of his history that I shall now chiefly direct my attention.

Hitherto religion had made no particular impression on his mind. He was moral and decent in his conduct, regular in his attendance on public worship, and had accustomed himself to read chiefly books of divinity, after he had taken his degree of B.A. . . . He possessed, however, high ideas of clerical decorum and scrupulous conscientiousness in doing faithfully whatever he was convinced to be right, and so highly did he rate a strict regard to conscience in acting up to the light received, that he often used to say, in his own forcible way of expressing himself, that he owed the salvation of his soul to the resolute self-denial which he exercised, in following the dictates of conscience in a point which of itself seemed one only of small importance.

The case was this. He was extremely fond of cricket, and reckoned one of the best players in the University. In the week before he was ordained he played in a match¹ between Surrey and All England; the match had excited considerable interest

¹ It is not surprising that no account of this match can now be recovered. The records of the Surrey and Marylebone Clubs—at least as regards the names of players and the scores made—do not go back to anywhere near this date. In fact, neither of the present clubs was then in existence. The newspapers of the day never, I believe, gave any account of cricket matches in those days. There can be no doubt, however, about the fact, as it must have come at first hand from Henry Venn. Mr. Alcock, secretary of the Surrey Club, has kindly informed us that he has ascertained that there actually were matches played between Surrey and All England in May and June 1749, the names of the players in which have been preserved. The match above referred to must have been played in 1747, the year in which Venn was ordained deacon.

and was attended by a very numerous body of spectators. When the game terminated, in favour of the side on which he played (Surrey, presumably), he threw down his bat, saying, "Whoever wants a bat which has done me good service may take that, as I have no further occasion for it." His friends inquiring the reason, he replied, "Because I am to be ordained on Sunday, and I will never have it said of me, 'Well struck, Parson!'" To this resolution, notwithstanding the remonstrances of his friends, and even of the tutor and Fellows of his College, he strictly adhered. Nay, though his health suffered by a sudden transition from a course of most violent exercise to a life of comparative inactivity, he could never be persuaded to play any more.

The first considerable religious impression made upon his mind arose from an expression in the form of prayer, which he had been daily accustomed to use, like the world in general, without paying much attention to it, "That I may live to the glory of Thy name!" The thought powerfully struck his mind. What is it to live to the glory of God? Do I live as I pray? What course of life ought I to pursue to glorify God? After much reflection on this subject, he came to this conclusion, that to live to the glory of God required that he should live a life of piety and religion, in a degree in which he was conscious he had not yet lived—that he ought to be more strict in prayer, more diligent in reading the Scripture and pious books, and more generally holy in his conduct; and seeing the reasonableness of such a course of life, his uprightness again discovered itself in immediately and steadily pursuing it. He set apart stated seasons for meditation and prayer, turning his reading chiefly into a religious channel, and kept a strict account of the manner in which he spent his time and regulated his conduct. I have heard him say that it was his custom at this period to walk almost every evening in the cloisters of Trinity College during the time that the great bell of St. Mary's was tolling at nine o'clock; and, amidst the solemn tones and pauses of the bell, and the stillness and darkness of the night, he would indulge in impressive and awful reflections on Death and Judgment, on Heaven and Hell.

In a letter, written long afterwards to one of his children, he thus alludes to this early stage of his religious progress:—

How do I feel more than requited for all the pains I have taken, and the prayers I have offered, when I read your earnest desires that you may glorify God! Supernatural is that desire; it is the bud and the blossom which bring forth all the fruit the Church of God bears. Well I remember when, in the midst of

great darkness respecting the Person, the work, and office of my adored Redeemer—in the midst of utter ignorance of the Law and of my own total corruption—I felt this desire, strong and urgent, from day to day, and it hath never departed from me, and never will. This supreme desire to glorify God is like a friendly clue in a labyrinth, which guides us out of all perplexities, and excites an earnest cry, which in time brings us to the enjoyment of our God and Saviour, gives us increasing views of his excellency and glory, and ripens us for the vast assembly of perfect spirits, who are swallowed up in love and adoration of God, and are perfectly one with each other.

In this frame of mind, Law's *Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, a book which has been the means of exciting many to a life of holiness, was particularly useful to him: he read it repeatedly, with peculiar interest and advantage, and immediately began, with great sincerity, to frame his life according to the Christian model there delineated. He kept a diary of the state of his mind: a practice from which he derived great benefit, though not exactly in the way he expected; for it chiefly made him acquainted with his own deficiency. He also allotted the hours of the day, as far as was consistent with the necessary duties and employments of his station, to particular acts of meditation and devotion. He kept frequent fasts, and was accustomed often to take solitary walks, in which his soul was engaged in prayer and communion with God. I have heard him mention that in one of these retired walks, in the meadows behind Jesus College, he had such a view of the goodness, mercy, and glory of God as elevated his soul above the world, and made him aspire towards God, as his supreme good, with unutterable ardour and enjoyment.

For about six months after he was elected Fellow of Queens' he served the curacy of Barton, near Cambridge, where he distributed religious tracts, and conversed with the poor in a manner that several of them affectionately remembered after an interval of above thirty years.¹ He afterwards assisted different friends by officiating for them, at Wadenhoe, Northants; Sible Hedingham, Essex, and other places; where, besides the regular duty on Sundays, he used to instruct the people at his own house in the week. In July 1750 he ceased to reside in College, and began to devote himself entirely to ministerial work. He accepted the curacy of Mr. Langley,² who held the livings of St. Matthew, Friday Street, in London, and West Horsley, in Surrey. Mr. Venn's duty was to serve the church in London during part of

¹ Information doubtless derived from John Venn's visits there about 1780-2, when an undergraduate.

² Adam Langley, of Christ Church, Oxford.

the summer, and to reside the remainder of the year at Horsley. In this employment he continued four years.

At Horsley he instructed many of the poor during the week at his own house. His family prayer was often attended by thirty or forty of his poorer neighbours. The number of communicants was increased, while he was curate, from twelve to sixty. His activity and zeal, however, offended some of the neighbouring clergy, and occasioned them to stigmatise him as an enthusiast and a methodist, though, in truth, he had no knowledge whatever at that time of the persons usually distinguished by that name.

While he continued curate of Horsley he had an opportunity of showing a very remarkable instance of disinterestedness. Sir John Evelyn was patron of Wotton in that neighbourhood, a living worth between £200 and £300 a year. He was a gentleman very anxious to keep up the due knowledge and worship of God in his parish, and used to maintain the most friendly intercourse with the clergymen of that and the neighbouring parish, to which he also presented, being accustomed to drink tea with them alternately on a stated day in the week. It was an object, therefore, of importance to him to have at Wotton a clergyman of exemplary character, and a man of knowledge and learning. As soon as the living was vacant, the squire of Horsley, unknown to Mr. Venn, applied earnestly in his favour to Sir John, assuring him that he was the very kind of clergyman who would suit his views; and Sir John seemed already disposed to accede to his wishes. Mr. Venn, having learnt these circumstances whilst the patron's mind was still wavering, turned the scale against himself. Having long been acquainted with Mr. Broughton,¹ secretary to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and having a high respect for his virtues, he considered him as exactly the kind of man who would suit Sir John; and judging that he stood more in need of the preferment than himself, he wrote an anonymous letter to Sir John, giving a full and faithful account of his friend's character, and recommending him to the living. Sir John, after making inquiry into Mr. Broughton's character, presented him; nor had he ever reason to repent of following the advice of his anonymous correspondent.

Whilst he lived in this retirement his books and his devotions afforded him a fund of never-ceasing pleasure. He was accustomed to ride upon the fine downs in that neighbourhood,

¹ Mr. Thomas Broughton, then lecturer of St. Helen's, Bishopsgate, and prebendary of Salisbury, afterwards rector of All Hallows, Lombard Street. He held the living of Wotton from 1752 until his death in 1777. He was one of the original Oxford "Methodists," and among the first clergymen in London to admit George Whitefield to preach. He was for some time Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford, and remained secretary of the Christian Knowledge Society until his death. There is, or was, a monument to him at All Hallows Church.

and to chant to himself the *Te Deum*; and in this devotional exercise he used to be carried far above terrestrial objects. His plan of life was very methodical; realising, as far as he was able, that laid down by Mr. Law in his *Christian Perfection*. Mr. Law was indeed now his favourite author; and from attachment to him he was in great danger of imbibing the tenets of the mystical writers, whose sentiments Mr. Law had adopted in the latter periods of his life.

From a too fond attachment to Mr. Law's tenets, however, he was recalled by the writings of Mr. Law himself. When Mr. Law's *Spirit of Love* or *Spirit of Prayer*—I am not sure which—was about to be published, no miser, waiting for the account of a rich inheritance devolving on him, was ever more eager than he was to receive a book from which he expected to derive so much knowledge and improvement. The bookseller had been importuned to send him the first copy published. At length the long-desired work was received one evening; and he set himself to peruse it with the utmost avidity. He read till he came to a passage wherein Mr. Law seemed to represent the blood of Christ as of no more avail in procuring our salvation than the excellency of his moral character. "What," he exclaimed, "does he thus degrade the death of Christ, which the Apostles represent as a sacrifice for sins, and to which they ascribe the highest efficacy in procuring our salvation? Then farewell such a guide! Henceforth I will call no man master!"

This was the turning-point in his religious life, and marked his departure from the old type of Churchmanship which he had inherited, to that now familiar as Evangelicalism. The change was effected after much internal question and struggle, and study of the Scriptures. It does not seem to have been in any way due to the guidance or instigation of others. He had no acquaintance at this time with any of the few who had preceded him, either within the Church, like Grimshaw and Romaine, or on its borders, like Wesley and Whitefield. The change is very fully described by my grandfather; and well and wisely so; for he was profoundly convinced of the all-importance of the principles thus acquired, and their comparative novelty and unpopularity seemed to call for some justification and explanation. *The Life and Letters of Henry Venn*, as commenced a century ago, was in fact somewhat of a manifesto, and was intended to display the Evangelical thought and practice as illustrated at their best. But it

would be foreign to the purpose of these Family Notes to enter into the details of such a spiritual change. Those who consult the Life in question will find it admirably portrayed, both in the description by the author, and in the letters which are there printed.

In 1754 he accepted the curacy of Clapham, Surrey, where he remained five years, combining with this duty several lectureships in London. His duties consisted of a full service at Clapham¹ on Sunday morning; a sermon in the afternoon at St. Alban's, Wood Street; and one in the evening at St. Swithin's, London Stone. On Tuesday morning he had a sermon at St. Swithin's; on Wednesday morning, at seven o'clock, one at St. Antholin's; and on Thursday evening, at Clapham.

It is not surprising that under the strain of this work he broke down; suffering from a severe illness in 1756, by which he was incapacitated from work for about eight months. After his recovery he remained at Clapham for some years, but probably gave up some of the work in London.

At Clapham he made acquaintance with several congenial friends. One of these was John Thornton, well known for his piety and princely liberality. Another was Sir John Barnard, a great merchant, Lord Mayor of London in 1737, and for seven successive Parliaments member for the City. Sir John had been a friend of his father (*v.* p. 61). It was here also, in all likelihood, that he first came to know Lady Huntingdon and George Whitefield; the latter especially was an intimate friend of Thornton.

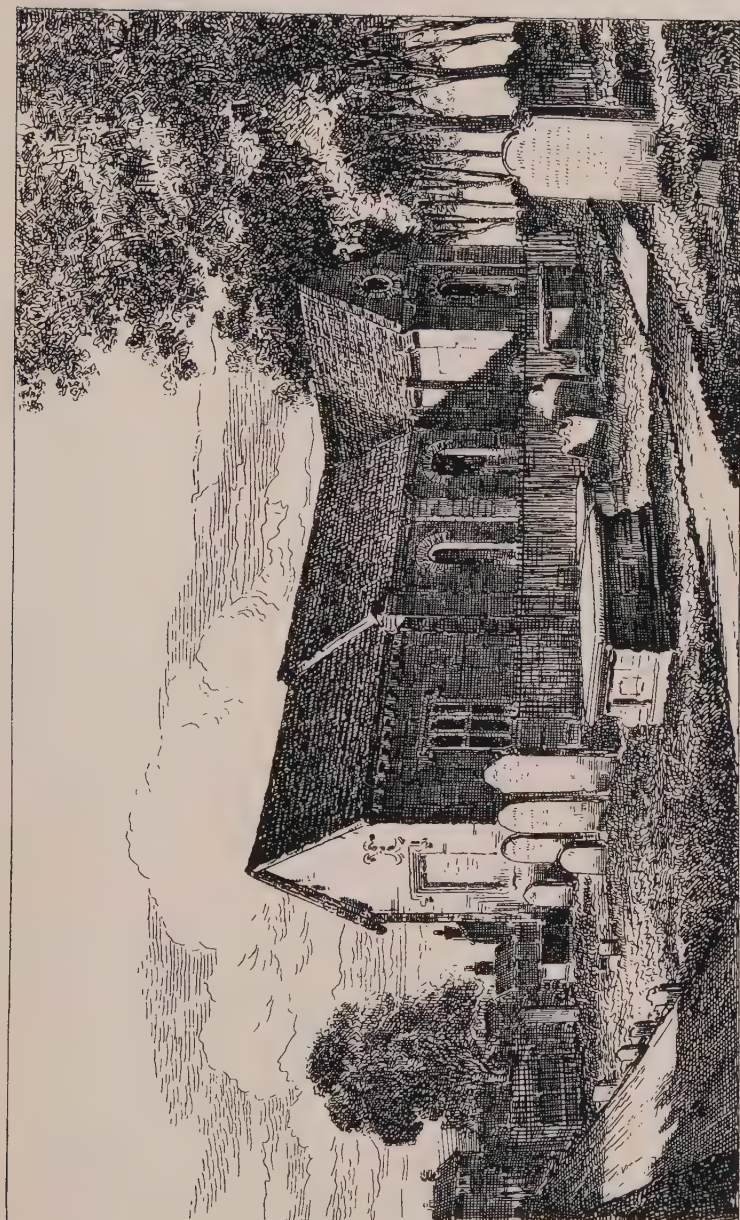
At Clapham, or in the neighbouring village of Camberwell, he first met the lady who soon after became his wife. She was Eling, daughter of the Rev. Thomas Bishop, D.D., formerly minister of St. Mary le Tower, Ipswich. Some account of the family is given in the Appendix. It will

¹ The rector at this time was Sir James Stonehouse, Bart., appointed in 1753. He held the living till 1792. From the total absence of any reference to him by Mr. Venn we may conjecture that he left the curate to do what he pleased. It may be remarked that it was only the morning service that was in the rector's or curate's hands. The afternoon service was conducted by a lecturer; and Sunday evening services were unknown, being very generally feared and discouraged there as elsewhere. It was not until his son's time, many years afterwards, that the rector acquired what would now be considered ordinary control of his own church.

suffice here to say that, in addition to Dr. Bishop's many excellent qualities, he was rather profuse in his expenditure, and a bad manager. The result was that after his death his family was left in a state of decided poverty. Eling, in particular, having parted with the little property left to her, in order to enable her brother to marry, found some employment with her sister Martha in a dressmaking establishment. Henry Venn seems to have made her acquaintance in 1756, in which year her letters to him commence. A number of these letters have been preserved, but they deal almost entirely with her religious experience. "In this lady Mr. Venn found a mind congenial with his own; the most sincere and exalted piety directed by a sound judgment, and enriched by a sweetness of disposition and animation, which rendered her particularly interesting as a companion and friend." He married her at Clapham, May 10, 1757.

Something more will be said about Clapham and its church when we come to John Venn. It will suffice here to say that the church in which he ministered is not the one on the common, Holy Trinity, now often called the old church. It stood some distance off, "on an eminence¹ sloping down to the road from London to Kingston. It was dedicated to the Holy Trinity, and consisted of a nave, chancel, and north and south transepts, the former of these transepts being occupied by the monuments of the Atkins family. North and south aisles were afterwards added in 1715 and 1730" (*History of Clapham*, published by H. N. Batten, 1827). This old church must have already been in a somewhat dilapidated state in Henry Venn's time, for in 1769, Mr. Couse, an architect, was requested "to superintend the propping up of the old church, to quiet the minds of the inhabitants." In 1774 its state seems to have become worse, for "an Act was granted for building a new church, in pursuance of which the old church was taken down, except the north aisle, which was left for the performance of the burial service." In this condition it remained, serving as a sort of mortuary

¹ It must have been built on the first rise of the ground out of what were in early times the vast marshes of Battersea and Lambeth. A church seems to have existed there from the twelfth century.



CLAPHAM OLD CHURCH.
Finally removed 1815.

chapel,—the new church on the common had no burial-ground attached to it,—for forty years. In 1815 this north aisle was removed, and a chapel of ease¹ was built on the site, which is the present St. Paul's Church. The chancel was added about twenty years ago.

In 1759 the vicarage of Huddersfield was offered to him. The patron, Sir John Ramsden,² was a perfect stranger, but had heard such a high account of him from the Earl of Dartmouth, that he desired at once to secure him for the living. After some hesitation, for the annual value was under £100, and Mr. Venn had already two children, he determined to ride down there and decide on the spot. The result was that he accepted it. As his son says, he took it at some pecuniary sacrifice,³ as he conceived that he should be far more extensively useful in a parish of many thousands than at Clapham, where he had not found the success he had hoped from his labours. The fact is that the Clapham of his day was a very different place from that which the religious associations of a later generation have made so widely known. Mr. Venn's own words are: 'Grieved at the obstinate rejection of the Gospel during five years by almost all the rich (and there were but few poor in the place), I accepted a living unexpectedly offered to me by my very affectionate friend the Earl of Dartmouth.'⁴ By this change of situation our income was reduced more than one half. However, believing (upon what I thought good grounds) several things to be true which were misrepresented, and supposing the small

¹ A brick erection of an exceptionally unecclesiastical appearance even for its time. It stands in the midst of the old graveyard, which appears to have been left quite unaltered. The new church on the common was simply a substitute for the old one, and therefore continued the former dedication of "Trinity." When the present St. Paul's was built on the ancient site a new dedication or name had to be assigned to it.

² The Ramsden family were for centuries almost the owners of Huddersfield, and are still very largely interested in it. They obtained the manor and patronage from Nostel Priory, soon after the Dissolution of the Monasteries. Sir John Ramsden, Henry Venn's patron, built the Cloth Hall in 1768. He died in 1769.

³ The statement in the *Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon*, that "urged by the necessities of his family he accepted the large and valuable living of Huddersfield," is the exact reverse of the truth. As we shall see, these necessities were the part-cause of his being forced to quit the place some years later.

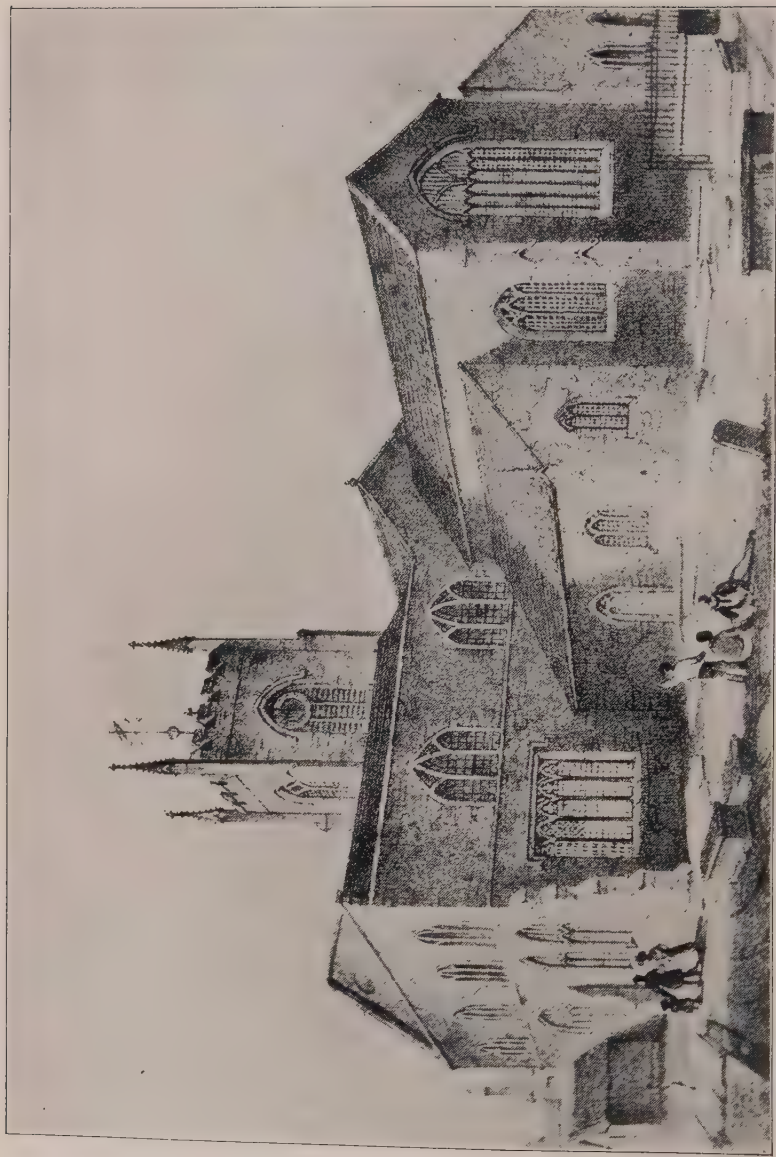
⁴ William, second Earl of Dartmouth. He was a close friend of Wesley and Whitefield, and is referred to by Cowper as "one who wears a coronet and prays." He was naturally the more interested in any appointment to Huddersfield, as being the owner of Woodsome Hall in the suburbs of the town.

income in so cheap a country would be sufficient to live upon, I determined to remove to Huddersfield." He adds that it seemed so impossible to support a family on the income that he was almost resolved to return to Clapham, but was dissuaded by his wife, who insisted that he had a clear call to stay there. This was after he had been there a few months.

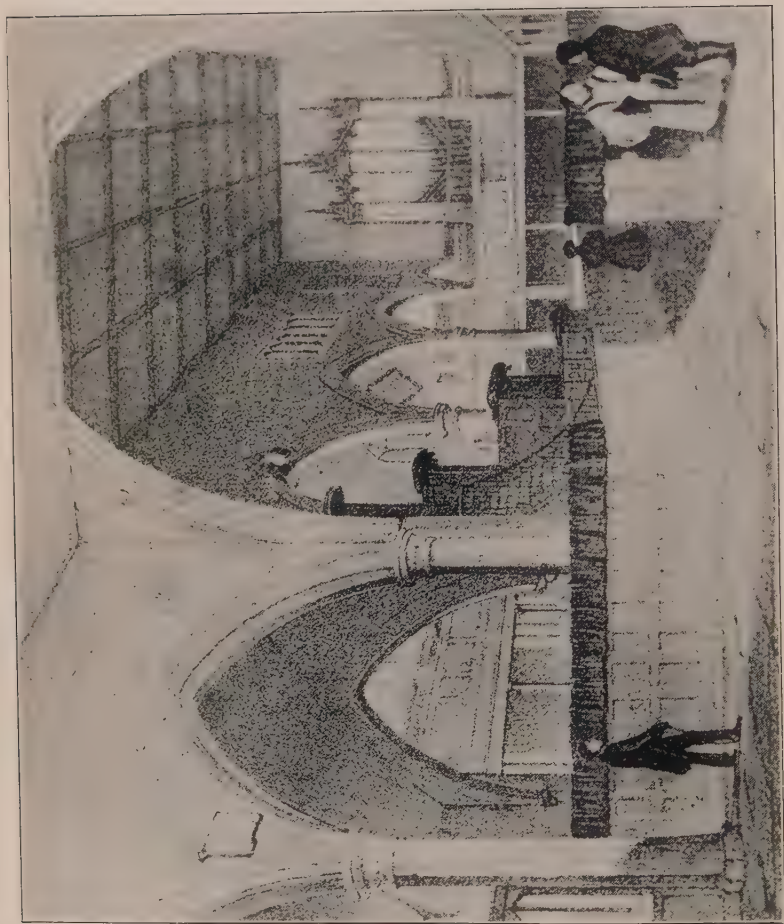
Huddersfield, like Clapham, is now connected in the minds of many people with associations of earnest and successful religious work ; but its character then was very different. Wesley, speaking with his almost unrivalled experience in such matters, thus describes the place when he visited it a few months before Mr. Venn's arrival:—"I rode over the mountains to Huddersfield. A wilder people I never saw in England. The men, women, and children filled the streets as we rode along, and seemed just ready to devour us" (Journal, 1757). Again, two years later he says, "I preached near Huddersfield to the wildest congregation I have seen in Yorkshire." As further illustration of the temper of the people a century ago, it may be added that it was here that the fiercest opposition was shown to the introduction of machinery and the factory system. This rose to a climax in 1812, when Horsfall's mill was attacked by an armed mob with great loss of life. A number of the ringleaders in this affair were tried and executed at York.

Socially and materially the Huddersfield of to-day has little but the name in common with that of 1760. The heather-clad moors surround it at a distance, as of old—the same hills over which the earnest seekers after Gospel truth would come straggling in all weathers to hear the new preacher,—but the town itself has been transmuted to an extent almost unexampled in England. At least it would be hard to find another case of a town which, though itself old, has literally nothing old left in it. Even the parish church, where one naturally looks for antiquity, is entirely new.

The town, it need hardly be said, had long been a relatively important centre of the wool manufacture. But the conditions of production were totally unlike those of



THE OLD CHURCH, HUDDERSFIELD.



THE OLD CHURCH, HUDDERSFIELD.
From Contemporary Print.

the present day. There were no factories in existence, the work being entirely carried on at home with hand-loom. "Masters" and "men," if the terms were in use then, were probably almost equally numerous. Much of the work was done in the town itself, but much also in the many hamlets scattered amongst the neighbouring hills, but included in the vast parish. From these and other places of production the people used to bring in their cloth, and hang it for sale on the walls of the churchyard. This practice continued until Sir John Ramsden built the Cloth Hall in 1768.

Though the population was large—it was probably about 5000 altogether in 1760—the place was then, and for long afterwards, essentially an overgrown village. It was not incorporated as a municipal borough until 1868; and throughout the eighteenth century it was for the most part governed, like an ancient village, by the lord of the manor. Even the market was not established till 1683.

The parish church, dedicated to St. Peter, has, since the Reformation, been in the patronage of the Ramsdens, as lords of the manor—"the manor of Huddersfield in the honour of Pontefract," as it was described. The church in which Henry Venn ministered no longer exists. It was built about 1506—a date marked by the erection of so many of our larger parish churches,—and seems to have been a fine building, though it had become somewhat dilapidated by the time in question. We give an illustration here, representing it substantially as it was in Mr. Venn's time. The present church is an entirely new structure, on the old site, and was built in 1836. The only traces of antiquity, I believe, still to be found in it are the font, and a few monuments which were moved into it from the old church. The monument to Henry Venn, in the chancel, was placed there when the church was rebuilt. That which he placed to the memory of his wife in the churchyard in 1767 is still there.

The vicarage house, also, is entirely new, and in a different situation. Mr. Josiah Bateman, late vicar, in his *Clerical Reminiscences*, says, "This was a very old building, in the worst part of the town, with a garden

attached in which nothing green would grow. Close by a large old-fashioned inn was standing which in times past had been built upon the glebe. But all was hemmed in by tall chimneys and wretched buildings." Accordingly a new vicarage was built in the suburbs of the town.

Directly he arrived Mr. Venn threw himself into the work of the place with the utmost vigour.

As soon as he began to preach at Huddersfield, the church became crowded to such an extent that many were not able to obtain admission. Numbers became deeply impressed with concern about their souls; persons flocked from the distant hamlets,¹ inquiring what they must do to be saved. His bowels yearned over his flock; and he was never satisfied with his labours among them, though they were continued to a degree ruinous to his health. On the Sunday he would often address the congregation from the desk, briefly explaining and enforcing the Psalms and the lessons. He would frequently begin the service with a solemn and most impressive address, exhorting them to consider themselves as in the presence of the Great God of Heaven, whose eye was in a particular manner upon them. His whole soul was engaged in preaching; and as at this time he only used short notes in the pulpit, ample room was left to indulge the feelings of compassion, of tenderness, and of love, with which his heart overflowed towards his people. In the week he stately visited the different hamlets² in his extensive parish; and collecting some of the inhabitants at a private house, he addressed them with a kindness and earnestness which moved every heart.

An instance occurs to me here of the effect and success of his preaching which deserves to be recorded. A club, chiefly composed of Socinians, in a neighbouring market town, having heard much censure and ridicule bestowed upon his preaching, sent two of their body, whom they considered the ablest to detect absurdity and the most witty to expose it, to hear this strange preacher and to furnish merriment for the next meeting. They accordingly went. When Mr. Venn ascended the reading-desk he addressed his flock, as usual, with a solemnity and dignity which showed him to be deeply interested in the work in which he was engaged. The earnestness of his preaching, and the solemn appeals he made to conscience, deeply impressed them; so that one of them

¹ Mr. William Moorhouse, afterwards an Independent minister (see p. 96), has described how he used, when a lad, to walk from Penistone to Huddersfield and back on Sundays, to hear Mr. Venn preach, a journey of some twenty-five miles altogether.

² In a letter to Lady Huntingdon he says, "My congregations are daily increasing. Besides my stated labours on the Lord's Day, I generally preach eight or ten sermons in the week in the distant parts of the parish, where many come to hear who will not come to church."

observed, as they left the church, "Surely God is in this place. There is no matter of laughter here." This gentleman—a Mr. James Kershaw, of Halifax—called soon afterwards upon Mr. Venn, told him who he was, and the purpose for which he had come to the church, and earnestly begged his forgiveness and his prayers. From that hour to the day of his death he became one of Mr. Venn's most faithful and affectionate friends.

The deep impression made by his preaching upon all ranks of people was indeed very striking. The late Mr. W. Hey¹ of Leeds, who frequently went to Huddersfield to hear him preach, assured me that once, returning home with an intimate friend, they neither of them opened their lips to each other till they came within a mile of Leeds, a distance of about fifteen miles: so deeply were they impressed by the truths they had heard from the pulpit and the manner in which these had been delivered.

He made a great point of the due observance of the Sabbath in the town and parish. He induced several of the most respectable and influential inhabitants to perambulate the town, and by persuasion, rather than by legal intimidation, to repress the open violation of the day. By such means a great and evident reformation was accomplished.

He endeavoured to preserve the utmost reverence and devotion in public worship, constantly pressing this matter upon his people. He read the service with peculiar solemnity and effect. The *Te Deum* especially was recited with a triumphant air and tone, which often produced a perceptible sensation throughout the whole congregation. He succeeded in inducing the people to join in the responses and singing. Twice, in the course of his ministry at Huddersfield, he preached a course of sermons in explanation of the Liturgy. On one occasion, as he went up to church, he found a considerable number of persons in the churchyard waiting for the commencement of the service. He stopped to address them, saying he hoped they were preparing their hearts for the service of God, etc. He concluded by waving his hand for them to go into the church before him, and waited till they had all entered.

He took great pains in catechising the young persons in his congregation, chiefly those who were above fourteen years old. The number was often very considerable, and he wrote out for their use a very copious explanation of the Church Catechism.

The above is the account given by John Venn, who

¹ An eminent physician of Leeds, and the most distinguished of a numerous and well-known family there, others of whom will be mentioned in the notice of John Venn. William Hey was a Fellow of the Royal Society, to which he was recommended by Dr. Priestley. His life was written by Dr. John Pearson (see also *Leeds Worthies*, by R. V. Taylor).

was twelve years old when his father left Huddersfield. His elder sister, Eling, has given the following reminiscences :—

I used to hear Ruth (the maid) come running across the long passage ; the door would open and she would say, "A man wants to speak to you about his soul." "Tell him to come in," my father would say. I remember the look of many of them to this day, with channels upon their black cheeks, where the tears were running. "Oh, Sir," they would begin at once to say with eagerness, "I have never slept since last Thursday night. Oh, Sir, your sermon." "Well, I am thankful to hear it," my father would say. "There, my dears, shake hands with that good man and go." "Are these your children?" "Yes ; pray for them," my father would say. Then, when we were gone, my father would pray with them, and speak to them in the most solemn manner. This would happen three or four times in the morning. "There was quite a troop of t' young beginners," as Ruth used to say.

In the year 1824, his grandson, Henry Venn, paid a visit to Huddersfield in order to gather up the recollections of the few survivors amongst the congregation who were still to be found in the neighbourhood, after a lapse of fifty-three years. The results of his inquiries are mostly published in the *Life* and are a singularly graphic description of the effects of profound religious emotions on simple and rugged natures, as recalled in old age. The following notes may be added to what has been published :—

I saw Mr. John Edwards, aged seventy-four, who said, "I was a very wild lad all the time of Mr. Venn, yet I loved to hear 'm. I didn't leave my sins, but yet there was a something which prevented me from being so easy in 'm. . . . There was no man like 'm in that day among all the preachers, and it's not every age that sees such an one. . . . He was a very tender-hearted man, he could not help giving when anybody asked : his wife often felt in his pockets before he went out, for he gave everything away that they contained. . . . All liked Venn 'mself, he was so kind a man ; even his enemies dwelt at peace with him, and all to a man were sorry when he left us. When he gave up the register of the people to his successor, there was 'poor' marked against many of the names, and against others 'very poor' ; so they asked him what it meant, and he said, from the 'poor' he took nothing, and to the 'very poor' he always gave

something when they came to pay their dues. I recollect, when standing outside the church, old Murgatoyd of the George Inn came to hear him, and after staying a time came out again before the sermon was over; so we asked him whether he had had enough. 'Ah,' he said, 'yon man would tire the devil.' A shrewd fellow, who stood beside, replied, 'Yea, that he's done mony a time.' A great difference was produced in the whole place; he was the first gentleman who had been amongst them, and the town began to improve from that time. . . . I have often heard tell that, when he visited Huddersfield some years after he had left it, he came on horseback with some friends, and when he saw the old steeple three miles off, he drew up and burst into tears."

Old John Starky lives in a cottage sunk half-way under ground, by the side of a steep road which goes over a high hill called Cawcliff, about two miles off. He is just eighty, past work, but his faculties are lively, and his recollection distinct. Upon parting with me he grasped my hand, and his eyes filled with tears, while he said, "I canna tell you how fain I be to see you. . . . He (Mr. Venn) made mony weep. I've cried mony a bit. When he got warm with his subject he looked as if he'd jump out of pulpit. I could have stooden and heard 'm while morning." Mr. Midward, aged seventy-eight, said, "Mr. Venn was a very bold man. He was afraid of no one. If he had not been of that sort he ought never to have come here, for he came into a den of lions and tigers. He had great opposition at first, and many slanderers. But after a time he won over all to like him, and if any one had wished to hurt him they dare not have done it on account of the neighbours. He produced a great change in the observation of the Sabbath. Before his time we had butchers killing the meat and carrying it to the shambles, and travellers exposing their goods; but he used to go round with the churchwardens and put a stop to all such things." Mr. W. Hurst, turned eighty-seven, perfectly recollected his first coming and preaching his first sermon, and the noise he soon made throughout the whole country. People used to come and hear him regularly from Leeds, as well as places within ten or twelve miles. Mrs. Powley¹ recollected hearing of an inn-keeper at the Crown, Huntingdon, at whose inn Mr. Venn and Mr. E. Bates once stopped to dine, being so much struck with the conversation which he casually heard, when he brought in the first dish, that he stayed and waited throughout dinner, and received impressions which, though not at the time very effectual, yet induced him afterwards to send for Mr. Venn during his last illness, and to leave directions to be buried at Yelling.

¹ Widow of the Rev. Matt. Powley, vicar of Dewsbury; see on, p. 93.

The following extracts from the *Memoirs*¹ of the Rev. Joseph Cockin add a good many particulars about Mr. Venn from a rather different point of view. Mr. Cockin fell under Mr. Venn's influence, when quite a young lad, against violent opposition from his father.

As divine service was at that time kept up by Mr. Venn at Huddersfield church on Thursday evenings, I made a point of attending, though I was at the distance of four miles and had to go alone. To facilitate my escape, my mother, in the course of the afternoon, carried my clothes into a private place in the fields, and I went and changed those in which I worked that I might appear in decent trim. I remember once being waylaid by my father, and there was no way of escape but through a river which I was just able to ford. To this place I repaired, put off my clothes and carried them over my head, and thus effected my purpose. Such were the difficulties which attended the commencement of my religious course.

He was soon afterwards sent away from home, to remove him from the preacher's influence.

It was alleged that we had been happy before we got hold of Venn's religion, but since then there had been no rest, and that it should have no more continuance in that house.

On the first Sabbath morning he gave out one of Dr. Watts' hymns, and his text was, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved." They who were in the church, with such truths, and such vehement persuasive language as they had not heard before, and they who stayed at home to cook dinners, wondered at the unusual length of the service. Tidings of this extraordinary preacher soon spread far and wide and attracted crowds to hear him, some of whom came six or seven miles to hear him.

Mr. Cockin also furnishes the following anecdote :—

In the year 1767 Mr. Venn left home, intending to go to a greater distance and to be absent a longer time than ordinary. He agreed with his friend Sir Charles Hotham,² to take a tour on the Continent; but when they arrived in France, and had advanced but a little way in that kingdom, he dreamed one night that Mrs. Venn was very ill. The dream made a considerable

¹ Published (2nd edition) 1841. Mr. Cockin was for many years an Independent minister at Halifax.

² Charles Hotham, afterwards baronet. He was for some time in the 15th Regiment, and Groom of the Bedchamber to George III.

impression on his mind and left him very pensive next morning ; but his companion slighted it, and wondered that he should be seriously uneasy from such a cause. Next night, however, the dream¹ was repeated with additional circumstances and a more vivid impression. This convinced him that it was preternatural, and accordingly he gave up the design of his journey, and immediately hastened home. When he alighted from the coach at Barnsley he inquired of the mistress of the inn, whom he knew, if she had heard anything from Huddersfield lately ? Yes, she said, she had heard that Mrs. Venn was ill. That was the intelligence he most dreaded ; and though the shades of evening were coming on, he called for a post-horse, and pushed forward without delay. Late in the evening the man heard the sound of a horse's feet in the yard, and when he opened the door, to his great surprise he saw his master, whom he supposed to be in France. He eagerly asked, "John, how is your mistress ?" "Indeed, sir, she is very ill." He rushed past him and ran upstairs without stopping a moment to put off any part of his travelling dress. Mrs. Venn died on the fourth day after his return, namely, September 11, 1767. This account is given on the authority and from the information of John Moorhouse, an intelligent conversable man whom I (John Cockin, the author of his father's *Life*) met at Stockport several years ago, and who had been in the service of Mr. Venn a considerable time.

This tour was made, or rather was commenced, a year or two after Smollett's famous journey, his description of which shows that a foreign tour was a rather adventurous matter at that day for those who could not travel as great lords. Strange to say, Mr. Venn has made no allusion whatever to it in his many letters. We only know that he returned by the common route to Harwich, namely, by Helvoetsluys ; as it was at this last place that he met the Swedish gentleman who testified so warmly to the profit he had received from the *Complete Duty of Man*.

Mr. Venn's own account of the death of his wife is printed in the *Memoir*. It seems to have been originally given in a letter² written by him at the time to his intimate friend Sir Richard Hill, brother of Rowland Hill. It was

¹ It is a curious fact that John Venn, then a boy at school, between eight and nine years of age, always declared that he had had a similar vision or impression on the morning of his mother's death. This has not been mentioned in print ; probably it was feared in those days that any belief of this kind would be regarded either as sheer superstition or as a claim of special Divine favour.

² Published by T. S. Jones, D.D., 1822. It was also printed in Mr. Wells' *Spiritual Register*.

first published apparently in the *Life* of the Viscountess Glenorchy, sister of Sir Richard Hill.

Shortly after his wife's death, Sir Charles Hotham took Mr. Venn for a short tour with him in the south and west of England; but this was mainly a round amongst the settlements of Lady Huntingdon; Brighton, Bath, Trevecca, etc. Writing to Mrs. Riland, the wife of his curate John Riland, he says—

October 28, 1769.—I am in as good health as with me is usual, and, what is better than health, I am made useful to souls here. Indeed, my talent seems to be for Conversation and for Itinerancy. Lady Huntingdon is almost as careful of me as you would be yourself, and the conversations I have with her are animating and delightful. How glorious and faithful a witness is she! Not a day, not an hour passes, without some one or other reaping the benefit of her alms, her gracious counsel, her fervent love, and cordial prayers. . . . It is said, when we are at Rome we must do as they do at Rome. I find it must be so here, with respect to my hours of rising and going to bed. Instead of my delicious living, I go to bed at twelve, and rise at a quarter-past seven, and breakfast at half-past nine, and dine at three; and every other day I ride out about ten miles.

It was during his stay at Huddersfield, in 1763, that he published the work by which he was long best known, namely, the *Complete Duty of Man*. The title was doubtless purposely chosen in order to mark a contrast with the doctrines of the well-known work of the previous century, the *Whole Duty of Man*. It is, in fact, a sort of manifesto of the Evangelical views. Its success was rapid and wide, and his son, writing shortly after the author's death, says that twenty editions had already been sold. Several remarkable instances are recorded in the *Life*, showing the profound influence which this work produced, both in England and abroad, on many who read it. This success is a clear proof that it must in some way have been well adapted to the time, but it must be hard for those who now read it to understand the secret of its popularity. It is written in a tone of earnest simplicity, but we look in vain for any trace of those attractive characteristics which we know to have been so prominent in his personal intercourse. To compare but one or two

well-known devotional writers : any one who looks into the works of Law, or Baxter's *Saints' Rest*, or Taylor's *Holy Living and Dying*, whether he fully accepts the doctrines or not, can appreciate the power and attraction. But the *Complete Duty*, I suspect, would generally strike him as being rather like one of those sermons which he is accustomed to glance at and dismiss. It is quite certain that no one who *heard* Venn preach or converse ever felt in this way.

Mr. Cockin gives the following account of the circumstances under which Mr. Venn left Huddersfield :—

Why then did he leave the place ? and especially, why did he leave it for Yelling, a parish which was thinly inhabited, and where his congregations, his respect, and his influence were far inferior to what they had been in Yorkshire ? He was kind and generous in disposition ; his style of living was genteel and hospitable ; he kept a horse and a man-servant ; and his charities were liberal and extensive. His income from the vicarage was not adequate to a third part of these demands, and the deficiency was supplied by the benefactions of Lord Dartmouth, Mr. John Thornton, and other opulent friends. In the course of years, and from the various changes of life, some of his resources failed ; and at the same time his children grew up, and were to be educated. When his receipts lessened and his expenses increased he saw himself in danger of embarrassment : he felt it necessary to reduce his establishment, and he thought it more agreeable to enter upon this system of retrenchment and economy in a new place than to do it at Huddersfield. The late Mr. Kershaw (see p. 81), who enjoyed a confidential intimacy with Mr. Venn, told me that this was the true reason why he accepted the rectory of Yelling. Such a cause, we are ready to think, might have been removed, but he was too delicate to declare it, and the people do not seem to have been aware of it, for they always speak of his removal from Huddersfield as a strange thing for which they could not account.

That he was more or less in narrow circumstances all his life is quite true. Though never uttering a word of complaint, or soliciting help from his wealthy friends except for the poor of the parish, there are very many incidental allusions in his letters which show this ; and several instances are recorded in his *Life* of the straits in which he sometimes found himself. Still, but for his health, he would have managed to struggle on in the

place for which he felt himself so eminently suited. In a letter written just before his departure (December 8, 1770) he says—

It is a happy circumstance for me, since even you and all my dear friends in Yorkshire seem determined to place my removal to a lucrative motive, that the living I am going to will not suffer any such construction, nor will my circumstances be at all materially mended by it. But this does not in the least affect me, because I plainly perceive, every time I preach, how much I am hurt, and the very last time I preached in Bath chapel I had such a palpitation of heart (a thing I never had before) as soon as I sat down in the chair, as made me ready to faint away. This and many other symptoms I feel, but, because I am cheerful and ride about, my Yorkshire friends, through their affection for me, make little of the matter; and as Mrs. Jones expressed it, she said if she were one of the Huddersfield congregation she had sooner see me drop down dead than leave the place. I feel very sensibly what a total change in my condition this event will bring about; and if I seem to consult flesh and blood, there are many more comforts in Huddersfield than at Yelling. Do not you believe I enjoy the Word of God, the House of God, the Table of God, and the Ministers of God? and where are they to be enjoyed in that degree they are at Huddersfield? What is a little church with at most a hundred people? What is a small solitary village? What is the Lord's Table, with perhaps twenty communicants, with what I have for near twenty years been used to? Only renew my strength and make me in any degree capable of the labour of my much-loved post, and I will be bound to strive rather than leave it.

Again, in a later letter he says—

Nothing would have prevailed on me to leave Huddersfield if my lungs had not received an irreparable injury, of which I am more sensible, by several symptoms, than ever. Looking upon my dissolution as at no great distance, I go to Yelling as a dying man.

At Huddersfield, as afterwards at Yelling, he was by no means a stay-at-home person. Partly on account of health, but still more as regarding himself as being somewhat of a missionary in a benighted land, he made repeated visits to distant parts of the country. These journeys were almost always made on horseback, and his stopping-places were generally at the houses of devoted friends, for

his acquaintance—considering the general unpopularity of his religious views—was extensive. Very frequently he stopped with the Countess of Huntingdon in London, or at Bath or Brighton. His letters often contain accounts of his rapturous spiritual experiences during some lonely ride, and the affectionate greeting of his friends at the close of the day. For instance—

Mr. Jesse¹ met me at Malton, and accompanied me as far as Hull: he is a very excellent man, and seems appointed to evangelise the Wolds. At Hull I was transported by hearing Mr. Milner² on the Wednesday. In my judgment, he is much the ablest minister that I ever heard open his mouth for Christ. . . . He invited me to spend the evening with him. This was at the hazard of his character; for there were persons at the church who knew me, and seemed not a little gratified that Mr. Milner gave such a proof of his Methodism. I went on the evening of Thursday to Wintringham (Mr. Adam).³ The dear blessed man inquired cordially after you. At Wintringham I met with a young clergyman who some months since was a careless and worldly character . . . the young man is beginning to preach the Word of Life. He came with me as far as Lincoln, thirty-four miles, and spent the evening with me. I left him this morning at five, and have ridden fifty-two miles since. It has been a happy day indeed; happy in almost perpetual prayer. What though the way is quite lonely—over a heath of sixteen miles, without a house in sight—the river which maketh glad the City of God flowed around me. (From Peterborough, April 30, 1771.)

Again, in the autumn of the same year :—

From Sheffield I rode to Chatsworth, where I slept, and set off the next morning at six o'clock. . . . At Northampton no Mr. Madan,⁴ so that I fear he is ill. Thence I came hither (to

¹ Rev. William Jesse. For some time an occasional assistant to Lady Huntingdon at Oathall in Sussex, and elsewhere. Afterwards vicar of Hutton, Yorks.

² Joseph Milner, the well-known brother of the still better known Isaac. They were sons of a poor weaver at Leeds. Isaac, the president of Queens' College, and Dean of Carlisle, will be mentioned later. Joseph, of St. Catherine's Hall, was for many years head-master of the grammar school at Hull, and lecturer at Trinity Church. For some time minister of North Ferriby. He was an intimate friend and correspondent of Lady Huntingdon. Best known by his *Church History*, which was completed by his brother, who published his works in eight volumes in 1810. Joseph died in 1797, aged fifty-three.

³ Thomas Adam (1701-84), son of Mr. H. Adam, town-clerk of Leeds. At first at Cambridge for two years, afterwards at Oxford, where he graduated B.A. at Hart Hall. Rector of Wintringham, 1726-84. His sermons were published in three volumes.

⁴ Martin Madan. At first a barrister and man of society, afterwards a popular Evangelical preacher. Founder and first chaplain of the Lock Hospital, near Hyde

St. Albans), and my dear friend Mr. Clarke,¹ of Chesham Boyce, is sitting by me. . . . From Mr. Clarke I went to Reading, and was received with unfeigned love by Mr. and Mrs. Talbot.² He rode with me on my way to Bath. We had very much communion of heart. From Mr. Talbot's I rode to Pewsey, and was most cordially received by Mr. Townsend.³ From thence I came here (to Bath) yesterday, and found Lady Huntingdon and my dear son in the Gospel, as he will call himself, Mr. Shirley.⁴ We are to share the work between us [*i.e.* the ministration in Lady Huntingdon's chapel].

Well might he say, towards the close of his life, in a letter to his son, "You have been every day in my thoughts as enjoying now one of the most delicious gratifications below,—the travelling from place to place, visiting the excellent of the earth."

On these journeys he used to preach wherever allowed, with the natural result to one who was seeking rest, that he not unfrequently knocked himself up and undid all the good of the open-air exercise. He says himself in a letter—

In February 1766 the complaint in my chest increased so much that I was able to do next to nothing for seven months. This complaint, through my own unpardonable length and loudness in speaking, has not mended, but grown worse and worse. I have also found, every succeeding year, that I am more and more hurt by speaking.

In the spring of 1769, when staying with Mr. John

Park Corner. He was a brother of Spencer Madan, Bishop of Peterborough. He was very musical, and composed the tunes for several popular hymns. In later life he caused great scandal by a treatise which he published in defence of Polygamy (*Thelyphthora*, 1780). This led to his resignation of the chaplaincy and his retirement into private life. Being, like his brother, an excellent scholar, he devoted his leisure to classical study, and in 1789 published a literal translation of Juvenal and Persius, for the use of schools. He died in 1790.

¹ Thomas Clarke, rector of Chesham Bois, Bucks. Of Brasenose College, Oxford. Alluded to by Mr. Romaine as the "Solomon of the age." He was a curate in Yorkshire when Mr. Venn made his acquaintance.

² William Talbot, LL.D., M.A., of Exeter College, Oxford. Vicar of Kington, Warwickshire, and afterwards vicar of St. Giles', Reading. One of Lady Huntingdon's preachers. Died March 2, 1774.

³ Joseph Townsend. Son of the celebrated Alderman Townsend of London, M.P. for Calne. Former Fellow of Clare College, and one of Lady Huntingdon's preachers at Bath. He was presented to Pewsey by his father.

⁴ Hon. Walter Shirley, first cousin of Lady Huntingdon. He was rector of Loughrea, Co. Galway, but he spent much of his time in England, where he was chaplain to, and a frequent preacher for, his cousin. He sided strongly with her and Whitefield in the dispute with Wesley which excited so much interest in Methodist circles. He took an earnest part in all Lady Huntingdon's schemes. Known as a hymn-writer. He died in 1786.

Thornton at Clapham,—this was when he had already become subject to attacks of hæmorrhage from the lungs,—he says—

I have not been idle. I have been too much pressed to refuse; and on the whole, I have preached twenty times, during eight weeks, to crowded churches; and, I think, with more boldness, delight, and power than I have ever done before. . . . Last Sunday morning I preached a Charity Sermon in one of the largest churches in London. The curate so hated my name that he left the church, and there was no one to read the prayers: after making the congregation wait, I was obliged to read them myself.

During his stay at Huddersfield he had a few, but very few,¹ sympathetic clergymen within accessible distance in the county. The chief of these were Dr. Richard Conyers,² vicar of Helmsley, his old Cambridge contemporary; Mr. James Stillingfleet, rector of Hotham, formerly of Queen's College, Oxford; and the well-known William Grimshaw of Haworth, of whom some account will be found in Mrs. Gaskell's *Life of Charlotte Brontë*. The itinerant "Methodists" also paid him occasional visits. The following extracts from Wesley's Journal refer to Huddersfield, during Mr. Venn's ministry:—

1761, July 20, Huddersfield.—I came to a full explanation with that good man, Mr. Venn. Lord, if I must dispute, let it be with the children of the devil: let me be at peace with Thy children.

1764, July 6.—In the evening I preached at Halifax, where I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Venn, with whom, in the morning of Saturday the 7th, I rode to Huddersfield, and preached there.

1765, August 15, Wednesday.—I preached in the evening at Leeds, and next morning rode to Huddersfield. Mr. Venn having given notice on Sunday of my preaching, we had a numerous congregation.

1766, August 8, Friday.—Preached at Huddersfield.

He was for some time, I think, equally cordial with

¹ In 1764, Wesley mentions, in his Journal, the names of thirty-two clergymen scattered over England whom he considered to be in general sympathy with him. Henry Venn's name is included amongst these.

² For some time vicar of Helmsley; afterwards, through the presentation of John Thornton, whose sister he married, vicar of St. Paul's, Deptford. Died 1787.

both Wesley and Whitefield, though his doctrinal sympathies were decidedly closer with the latter, and his friendship with him of considerably earlier date. As early as 1757, during his life at Clapham, he and Mr. Madan accompanied Whitefield on a preaching tour in the west of England, during which he stayed with the Countess of Huntingdon at her house in Clifton. Ten years later, writing from Huddersfield (1767, October 2), he says to Whitefield, "Have compassion on my people and my neighbourhood. Come and lift up your voice in my church on Tuesday. It is our market day. I can give notice on the Sabbath day: you will have thousands to hear you." The following letter from the *Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon* (i. 430) refers to the year 1768. It is written by Mr. Venn, who says that, being refused the use of the church at Cheltenham, they "preached in the churchyard. . . . At this juncture Mr. Whitefield made an awful pause of a few seconds, and then burst into a flood of tears. During this short interval Mr. Madan and myself stood up and requested the people as much as possible to restrain themselves from making any noise. . . . We separated in different directions amongst the crowd, and each was quickly surrounded by an attentive audience. Mr. Whitefield and myself purpose leaving this for London the day after to-morrow."

As other instances of his intimacy may be mentioned the fact that George Whitefield was one of the signatories to Mr. Venn's letters of appointment to be chaplain to the Earl of Buchan¹ in 1767, and that Mr. Venn preached the funeral sermon on Whitefield at Lady Huntingdon's chapel at Bath. Shortly before his wife's death Mr. Venn had contemplated going out to the American Colonies. The fact is mentioned in Mr. Riland's short MS. memoir of Mrs. Venn's last illness. That it was to Whitefield's College in Georgia seems quite certain. Indeed, in a letter of April 8, 1766, Mr Venn remarks, "I have given up all

¹ David Stewart, Earl of Buchan, born 1742. He succeeded to the earldom in 1767, and seems almost immediately to have appointed Venn, Berridge, and Fletcher of Madeley as his chaplains. His later life was spent in literary retirement in Scotland, but his adhesion to Lady Huntingdon seems to have created great excitement in fashionable circles.

thoughts of Georgia. Upon examination there are many things that forbid my undertaking that province."

After the well-known controversy and split between Wesley and Whitefield, on the question of Calvinistic doctrine, Mr. Venn's relations with the former, which had never been very intimate, became decidedly strained. In fact, in later years Mr. Wesley's preachers treated him with downright hostility. Writing to Mr. Powley,¹ vicar of Dewsbury, January 9, 1779, Mr. Venn says—

It was a grief but no surprise to me to hear that the Methodists oppose and contradict the truth you teach. Excepting some few, they are as ignorant of themselves and of the Gospel way of Salvation as those who make no profession; and no less bitter against the servants of Christ who have gone much farther than the first principles in which they stick. I have preached five years in a barn, where Mr. Wesley's preachers come. I never take the least notice of them or their doctrine, but establish the doctrine of man's sinfulness.

Again, a month later, writing to the Rev. J. Bottomley, of Scarborough, he says—

I have for many years been exceedingly abused by Mr. Wesley as an Antinomian Calvinist, holding doctrines which came from hell and lead to it. He has sent his preachers to Godmanchester [where Mr. Venn had been taking duty] after I began there, and is ever indefatigable in suggesting prejudices against me.

This seems a convenient place to say a few words about Mr. Venn's attitude as a Churchman. He was profoundly convinced of the truth of the doctrines of the Church of England, and of their essentially "Evangelical" character, and sincerely attached to its ritual and practice. As he says in a letter—

How often have I declared my utmost veneration for the Liturgy? How often, in your hearing, how often in the church, declared the superior excellency, in my judgment, of the Liturgy to every mode of worship, not only among the Dissenters, but that had ever been in the Church of Christ as far as I had know-

¹ Matthew Powley of Queen's College, Oxford. For some time curate to Mr. Venn at Huddersfield; afterwards vicar of Dewsbury. Mr. Powley married a daughter of William Cowper's friend Mrs. Unwin. He died December 23, 1806. He was at one time an earnest supporter and assistant of Lady Huntingdon.

ledge. . . . On Saturday I dined with our Bishop. I find he has no objection to a revisal and alteration of the Liturgy. This change will one day, I fear, take place, and then the measure of our iniquities will be full, when we have cast the doctrine of Christ out of the public worship.

This was written late in life, but represents his permanent convictions. The fact is that his position and attitude naturally and inevitably changed as years passed by. He had begun in cordial and hearty co-operation with both Wesley and Lady Huntingdon, and his personal affection towards the latter probably remained to the last. But as the Wesleyan and Huntingdonian Connexions hardened into definite organisations, they tended more and more to regard as hostile those who were not entirely with them. For many years, as has been said, Mr. Venn was an active helper of Lady Huntingdon, though never, I believe, one of her chaplains. For year after year he used to stay with her at Bath and take charge of her chapel there. He visited her at London, Brighton, and Clifton, conducting service in her chapels. He more than once went into South Wales to visit her College at Trevecca,¹ the rules for the management of which were drawn up by him, Romaine, and others. In 1771, when he was leaving Yorkshire, he says, "At Yelling, as at Huddersfield, I shall still be your ladyship's willing servant in the service of the Gospel; and when I can be of any service in furthering your plans for the salvation of souls and the glory of Christ I am your obedient servant to command."

Probably the first step in the alienation was caused by the decision of the Consistorial Court of the Bishop of London in 1780. An objection being raised to the erection of one of her chapels in Spa Fields, by the vicar of the parish, the case was tried in that Court. This decided the character of her chapels as Dissenting places of worship. They were accordingly placed under the shelter of the Toleration Act: her ministers were required to take

¹ Trevecca, in the parish of Talgarth, Brecknockshire. The house, which consisted of the ruins of an ancient castle, belonged to Howel Harris, the Welsh preacher, and was leased to the Countess of Huntingdon for a college for training her ministers. The College was afterwards transferred to Cheshunt, where it still exists.

the oath of allegiance as Dissenting ministers, and her chapels registered as Dissenting places of worship. In consequence of this, Mr. Venn never, as his son assures us, afterwards officiated in her chapels,¹ nor, I believe, did Romaine, Berridge, or most other of Mr. Venn's friends. Doubtless this action embittered the feelings of her party, until, towards the close of his life, in a letter to his son (January 1, 1796) he speaks as strongly as follows, "I am not displeased with the opposition of the Huntingdonians to your preaching (at Clapham). Their hatred is much to be preferred to their praise."

The following extracts from letters display his own spirit of moderation, and earnest deprecation of religious controversy :—

"Now, whilst you read these lines, Mr. Wesley, Madan, Hill, Shirley, Fletcher, and more, are all engaged in fierce disputes; Lady Huntingdon opposing to the uttermost his preachers, and they returning with violence the opposition, so that the world cries out, 'When will these saints agree which is the way to Heaven?'" (January 29, 1772). "Though the doctrines of Grace are clear to me, I am still no friend to High Calvinism. There is much in some villages not far from me, and I think it little better, if at all, than Deism. In one sense I prefer the latter, because it leaves a man accessible, whereas a false libertine Calvinism stops up every avenue. . . . Predestination cancels the necessity of any change, and dispenses at once with all duty" (Yelling, July 8, 1775).

In one case Mr. Venn certainly gave very definite assistance to the establishment of a Dissenting congregation, but this was somewhat early in his career, and his son assures us that he afterwards strongly regretted the step he had taken. This was on the occasion of his leaving Huddersfield. In spite of his appeal to Lady Ramsden, the then patroness² of the living, his successor at Huddersfield was a man entirely opposed to the doctrines which he had taught and the congregation had enthusiastically accepted. The people therefore subscribed together for the erection of a building in which they might continue

¹ Rowland Hill's well-known Surrey chapel, for some reason, stood on a different footing. Mr. Venn and others of his friends used to minister there, I believe, to the last.

² Sir John Ramsden died in 1769. His son was then a minor.

the same sort of service and preaching to which they had been accustomed. Mr. Venn encouraged them in so doing, and subscribed towards the undertaking. Mr. Moorhouse was the preacher selected. In a letter to him, dated September 26, 1772, about a year after he had left the place, Mr. Venn says, "God's name be praised that your church is in a flourishing condition. It has my daily prayers. I shall be glad to hear from you as my successor among a people whom I shall always love." In the course of another year or two¹ a new vicar was appointed, from whose preaching Mr. Venn would never have wished the people to absent themselves. But the schism, once started, naturally persisted, and the new church gradually developed into a permanent Dissenting community, which it still remains, under the name of Highfield Chapel. As Mr. Cockin says, "Such was the beginning of the Independent interest at Huddersfield." This result Mr. John Venn of Clapham says his father deeply regretted. It may be added that his curate Mr. Riland was strongly adverse to his conduct in this matter. "His advice and exhortation (to the people) was, 'Stick to the Church: by all means stick to the Church, and pray for the conversion of your minister; and if you can't approve of his preaching, remember you have the Gospel in the Prayers.'"

In the course of the year 1770 Mr. Venn's attacks of illness became so serious that he was obliged to resign the vicarage, though he did not preach his farewell sermon there until March 30, 1771. In the autumn of 1770, whilst on a visit to Bath, he received the offer of the rectory² of Yelling, Hunts, a small village about fifteen miles from Cambridge, which he at once accepted. Shortly afterwards he became engaged to the lady who became his second wife. She was a daughter³ of the Rev. James Ayscough, vicar of

¹ Mr. Harcar Brook, his immediate successor, was appointed in 1772, and died in 1773.

² It was a Chancellor's living, and was offered to him by Chief Baron Smythe, then one of the Commissioners of the Great Seal.

³ She was a somewhat near relation of Sir Isaac Newton, through which connection I am in possession of a mourning ring for the great scientific philosopher. I presume that this was through her father (Newton's mother was an Ayscough), but I have not discovered the exact link of connection.



Highworth, Wilts, and the widow of a Mr. Smith, and was at this time living at Kensington. They were married, July 15, 1771, at Kensington Church. For twenty-one years she remained his devoted wife, and acted as the wise and affectionate mother of his children.

The life at Yelling was naturally a great contrast with that at Huddersfield. A small village embedded in the clay, no resident gentleman, a few farmers and dull agricultural labourers: this took the place of the enthusiastic congregations that thronged the large church, and all the varied modes of influence in which he had taken delight. He soon adapted himself to his new work, however, and in one way or another continued his labours here for twenty-five years.

Yelling itself has been but little altered since his time. The situation is decidedly picturesque, and even hilly for Cambridgeshire—or rather Huntingdonshire, for it lies just within the borders of that county—in fact, one of those, locally, very rare indications, a warning to cyclists, stands by the rectory gate. The village is situated just on the edge of a slope, where the ground falls away towards the Bedfordshire Ouse and where it is much more broken and woody than in most parts of Cambridgeshire. The view from the vicarage garden, in front of the house, would be considered pretty anywhere.

The church is structurally but little altered. There was a spire in Mr. Venn's time, as represented in the accompanying sketch, but this was removed long ago. There is a nave, chancel, and two aisles, and though small, it is a very fair specimen of a village church. The arches on the north side of the nave appear to be of Norman date, somewhat modified, and are worth notice. There is one old monument existent—a stone sarcophagus in the south wall, without date or inscription. The only reminder of the Venn family is a tablet on the south side of the tower, outside, to the memory of the wife and brother of Henry Venn.

The old part of the vicarage house has scarcely been altered, though the building has been nearly doubled in size by a large addition made to it some fifty or sixty

years ago. The approach to it has been changed. As the sketch shows, the entrance was formerly from the front, up the hill; it is now on the level, past the church. There is—or was, some years ago—a tradition that the large chestnut tree in front of the house was planted by Henry Venn.

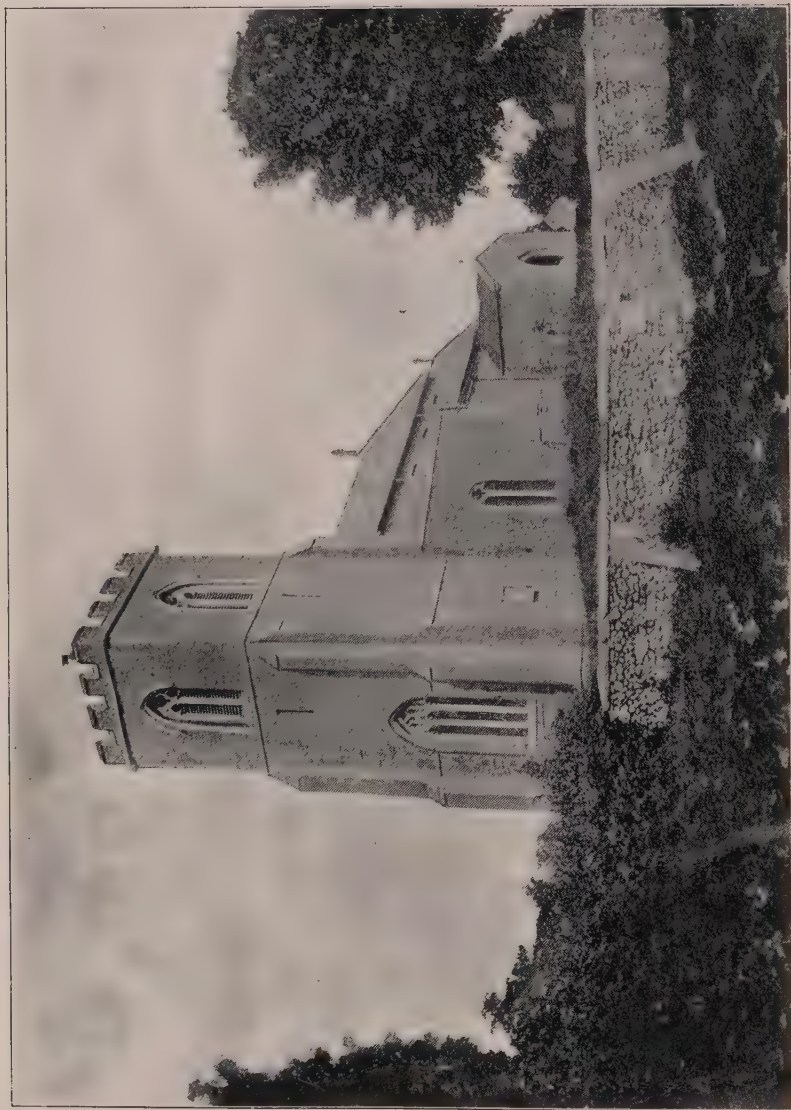
The main change in the neighbourhood consists in the enclosure of the country around. In those days almost the whole expanse between Cambridge and Yelling, as indeed on most other sides of the town, was what was called “field,” namely, open and unenclosed ground. Even now the stretch of ten miles to Caxton is only broken by five or six habitations, and probably the farmhouse, formerly an inn called the Two-pot house, was then the only house passed on the way. Presumably during part of Mr. Venn’s residence at Yelling the well-known gibbet¹ which still stands near Caxton, where the track crossed the Old North Road, was bearing its ghastly freight.

The consequent almost entire absence of practicable roads² in the neighbourhood made the place difficult of access in winter. In a letter to his brother-in-law, Mr. Brasier (Dec. 29, 1779), he says, “The snow being on the ground, we should have been at a great loss how to have brought you here without some apparent danger at least. By the first week in March, unless the weather should be worse than usual, I can engage that Mrs. Brasier shall be brought to the end of a close not a quarter of a mile from us without any more justly to alarm her fears than on the Turnpike.” This difficulty of access referred

¹ It was originally set up for a man named Gatward, son of a very respectable woman who kept an inn at Royston. He was convicted of robbing the mail about this spot, and hanged here in chains, 1753-4. Cole the antiquary (as quoted in C. G. Harper’s *Cambridge Road*) states that he saw the body hanging there. A brother, James Gatward, was for many years driver of a coach which passed the spot. Whether the existent gibbet ever served its original purpose is doubtful, but it is certainly an old erection. Not improbably there was more than one such display here, as tradition records one that must be of later date. An old relative of mine—Miss Harvey, daughter of Henry Venn’s daughter Catherine—who was often at Yelling in her childhood, and who died at a great age in 1884, assured me that she could remember *some* remains of a body there, though she could not be sure that there was more than a leg left in her time.

² When he moved from Huddersfield his furniture was sent by sea. The water access to Yelling was, by Lynn, up the Ouse to Paxton, which was within three or four miles of the village.







YELLING RECTORY, 1901.
Showing old and new parts.

mainly to the lanes east and west. The *Old North Road*, which ran within a couple of miles of the village, must have been fairly good, and was in fact generally used for the mails, though much of the passenger traffic went by the *Great North Road*, five or six miles to the west.

This remoteness told in many ways. For instance, it was almost impossible to secure a doctor. The rustics trusted to a local bone-setter; others had to send to Huntingdon or Cambridge. Accordingly Mr. Venn took particular care that the members of his family should be instructed in what would now be called "first-aid" practice. His daughter Jane became very accomplished in this way, and was for many years the recognised attendant in less serious cases, whether medical or surgical. His son John, he says, was taught enough medicine, whilst at Cambridge, "to be useful, and to learn to bleed," in case he should afterwards be appointed to a similarly remote parish.

During the comparative imprisonment of the winter he used to supplement the exercise of visiting the people by vigorous work at home. "I have not been on horseback once these seven weeks, and I should be shivering with cold if I did not work in cleaving and chopping; but doing this in the kitchen for an hour and a half each day, I never enjoyed my health better" (February 10, 1784).

He spoke of himself as going to Yelling "as a dying man," but, as a matter of fact, his health revived, and he was soon immersed in such active work as the place admitted of. Writing soon after his arrival—December 12, 1771—he says, "I preach near three hours on a Sunday; I have sixteen young people on a Tuesday; I speak on the Lessons every evening, and neither cough nor feel any pain on my breast, so I am meditating to do a little more if the renewed strength continues till summer." During the worst part of the year he often adopted the very sensible practice of having a sort of evening service in his own kitchen. "I have people enough to fill our large kitchen on Sunday evenings, but I find it very heavy. Yet I can't refrain myself, and they are very attentive." "Last Sunday evening we had fifty-two people in my kitchen, a surprising number when I tell you there are

only one hundred and sixty-one souls in the parish, the children included, and that it is a country very thinly sown with people."

Of clerical friends he had none in the immediate neighbourhood. In fact the only country neighbour with whom he was in sympathy was the well-known and eccentric John Berridge, formerly Fellow of Clare, and long rector of Everton, Bedfordshire. "Other clergymen in the neighbourhood we shall see none. My name is sufficient to disgust them; and if not, the preaching twice of a Sabbath is. None of the clergy in the neighbourhood, nor of the gentry, come near us." Gradually, however, he acquired a great and increasing influence in the University, from which he was only thirteen miles distant. The best known of the "disciples" whom he there gathered about him were Charles Simeon; William Farish, afterwards a professor; and Mr. Jowett, tutor of Trinity Hall. They used frequently to ride or drive over to Yelling to spend the day with Mr. Venn. It soon became an established custom for them to bring other young men¹ with them whom they wished to influence in the same direction. We shall see more of this influence when relating the life of his son John Venn, as most of the men referred to belonged to his generation.

Mr. Venn was always a diligent student. For several years from 1775, when he was turned fifty, he employed his leisure at Yelling in preparing his son for college, and there are many passages in his letters showing how wide was his range of reading. In particular he was a diligent student of French—a rare accomplishment for the clergy of that day. There are repeated references, in his letters, to his admiration of Dailé and Fénelon. "If you read French I would advise you to purchase a small volume which, though written by a Papist and a Primate of France, is one of the best books on the subject I have ever seen,

¹ One of these visitors has left a MS. copy (in my possession) of his first interview. He was a Mr. Flavel, who, with Thomas Thomason (afterwards well known in India) and another young man, paid such a visit to Yelling in 1795. See *Life*, p. 50. One of the characteristics which struck Mr. Flavel was Mr. Venn's cheerfulness and readiness of anecdote, in spite of extreme bodily weakness. Flavel died very young, shortly after his ordination.

and altogether scriptural excepting a page or two. The title is *Traité de Confiance en Dieu*; the author Archbishop of Sens." "I am just now finishing a fifth volume of Mr. Daillé, which carries one through the Epistles to the Philippians; and on Wednesday I received loan of eight volumes more." He elsewhere refers to having read Voltaire.¹

His principal employment during his country retirement was that of letter-writing. Many hundreds of his letters have been preserved, addressed to relations and friends in various parts of the country. They form a very remarkable collection, extending from comparative youth to old age, and breathe throughout the same spiritual joy, rising at times into rapture, intermixed with shrewd and wise advice. Those who read the *Life* will there find an abundant selection from his correspondence, admirably arranged. These letters need not be reproduced here; but it must be remembered that the *Life* was composed in order to portray the character of one who was somewhat of a leader in a religious revival, and lays very rightly prominent stress on this side of his nature. Such extracts from his correspondence as are here given are intended, therefore, not as a corrective, but as a supplement to what has been published.

His family grew up, and for the most part dispersed, during his residence at Yelling. His son John was at home there, during school holidays and University vacations, till he went to the vicarage of Little Dunham in 1783. Two of his daughters were married here, Eling to Mr. Charles Elliott, and Catherine to the Rev. James Harvey. The third surviving daughter, Jane, remained with him. In early life she had been delicate, or perhaps—as some of her father's letters seem to indicate—was inclined to consider herself delicate. She proved a rare house-

¹ "The most execrable book I ever read—and I have read Hume, Voltaire, Bolingbroke, etc., etc.—is a book lately published by Lindsay, defending and even exalting Priestley above Christ" (Letter to his nephew, Edward Venn, January 30, 1789).

Naturally he was, as a rule, utterly averse to the reading of fiction, but, like so many others of his time, he seems to have fallen under the spell of Richardson on one occasion. From what my uncle John Venn had heard, he was so captivated by the first volume of *Clarissa Harlowe*, which had somehow fallen into his hands, that he could not lay it down till he had finished it; he went over to a neighbouring town to procure each successive volume.

manager, especially after her step-mother's death in 1791, and was to the last a devoted attendant on her father during his declining years.

The simple and affectionate family life which was thus led—there never seems to have been the slightest variance between him and any of his relations—included all the servants who were worthy of it, who are as cordially remembered in his letters as if they were daughters. Amongst these Ruth Clarke¹ occupied the chief place. "Ruth is quite well; and doubly attached to us after her long absence (she had been sent to Yorkshire to recruit her health). She is indeed as a daughter; no creature living can be more thankful. . . . Oh what comfort and mutual satisfaction do masters and servants lose when there is no Christian love!" She remained with him to the last, having begun as a girl in their service at Huddersfield.

The following account of the family party at Yelling occurs in a letter (November 24, 1781) from Mr. Berridge to Mr. John Thornton:—

I came from Yelling not much improved in health, but greatly delighted with their family worship, and with the gracious behaviour of the whole family. Truly it seems a little household of faith. Nelly (Eling) is quick and smart, and appears to advantage in company; but Jenny (Jane) is the most solid and has the best abilities. She visits all the sick in the parish, makes up their medicines, delights in the work, and would make a good parson's wife. Jacky is the top branch of the tree; highest and humblest. His abilities seem equal to anything he undertakes, and his modesty is pleasing to all that behold him. He is so recollected in his talk that I seldom hear him speak a trifling thing. His behaviour in College has turned the hearts of the Master and Fellows entirely to him, who were very averse and injurious for a season, on account of his being the son of a Methodist clergyman. There seems not a doubt that he will be elected Fellow next Easter.

During the better part of the year he continued, as at Huddersfield, to travel a good deal, his journeys being undertaken partly for health, partly for the purpose of

¹ She came into his service as a Yorkshire girl, when he was at Huddersfield, and continued with him till his death. She was afterwards supported by the family at Clapham, where she died about 1806. Her life was published by my father in a short tract.

seeing friends, and preaching. For some time he used to go to Bath, and to preach at Lady Huntingdon's chapels, until the change of view as to their ecclesiastical position. Other visits were to John Thornton at Clapham, to his old friends at Huddersfield, and elsewhere. To the last, I believe, or at least as long as his health permitted, he used to preach for Rowland Hill. For instance, he says in 1785, "When I go to London I shall chiefly preach at Surrey Chapel. He (Hill) writes me word the people for the much greater part prefer the clergy, but if none will officiate there it must be supplied by Dissenters."

During the last five or six years of his life at Yelling he was gradually declining. He sometimes rallied, and then preached with all his old vigour. "I returned last Friday three weeks, and was very far from continuing my good resolution. On Sunday fortnight I preached as if I had been quite strong, very much indeed at liberty, an hour and ten minutes. And again, on the Tuesday following I preached at Cambridge for dear Simeon . . . and in the meantime, on the Saturday and the Sunday following, I lost my speech" (July 12, 1791). Then came further blows. Two months later his brother died, September 27, 1791; he had been an inmate of his house for several years, but had latterly become a complete paralytic. Then in the following spring his wife was carried off. He tried again a course at Bath, and afterwards at Buxton, and greatly rallied for a time after the latter. But his work as a preacher was completely done, though he continued to pour out his heart in letters to intimate friends. "I told my invaluable Jane I must write to you, but no more than five lines. Upon seeing what I have written, she tells me I surely meant to have said five pages" (Letter, 1795). He was tenderly waited on by his daughter; "she loves me a great deal too much for her own peace, and Ruth, like another daughter, no less agitated" (Letter, 1793).

Shortly before his death he left Yelling, and moved to Clapham, where his son had been rector since 1792.

He lingered on for some months, and died at Clapham, June 24, 1797. His last hours have been more than once

referred to in print, as displaying that extremely rare experience of triumphant joy to the very end. The following is his daughter's account :—

Mr. Pearson¹ attended him during the last few weeks of his life. About five weeks before his death he pointed out some fatal symptoms to Mr. Pearson. "Does not this look well?" he said. "Yes," Mr. Pearson answered, "it looks far too well for nobody but yourself." His eyes sparkled, and with the sweetest smile he said, "I thought so: I knew I could not be mistaken." He was so revived by the thought of dying soon, that Mr. Pearson said, "Why, surely, you cannot die for joy. The thought of it, I see, is such a cordial to you that it does more for you than anything we could give you." Two or three weeks afterwards Mr. Pearson said to me, "Madam, your father would have died a fortnight ago if it had not been for joy at dying."

In personal appearance he was of about the middle height, and in latter life seems to have become decidedly stout. He was of a fresh, open, rather rubicund countenance, a characteristic sometimes humorously alluded to by himself. "Dr. Peckwell sends his carriage to the tabernacle (Surrey Chapel) for Mr. Berridge and myself. Figure to yourself such a pair of divines, so plump and so jolly." "At Brighton I was desired by Mr. Mitchell, the rector, who concluded positively that nothing spiritual could have the least connection with such a countenance as mine, to give him a sermon." This clergyman, having been afterwards rallied by some friends at letting such opinions be expressed in his church, replied, "Who would have thought that such a cheerful, open countenance could have had any connection with Methodism?"

The accompanying likeness is taken from an oil portrait by Mason Chamberlain, done in 1770.

His general character is thus summed up by a rare judge of spiritual and literary qualities, the late Sir J. Stephen :—

¹ From some reminiscences by his daughter, Eling Elliott. The substance of it is printed in the *Life*. John Pearson, F.R.S., of Golden Square, was a celebrated surgeon of the day. He was father of the Rev. John Norman Pearson, first principal of the Church Missionary College in Islington, and grandfather of the late judge Sir John Pearson, and of Professor C. H. Pearson, the well-known historian.

He was one of the most eminent examples of one of the most uncommon of human excellencies—the possession of perfect and uninterrupted mental health. . . . There prevailed throughout the whole man a certain sympathy which enabled him to possess his soul in order, in energy, and in composure. . . . Those qualities which are antagonistic in most men were consentient in him ; and his talents, though separately of no very exalted order, became, by their habitual concurrence, of very singular efficacy. Thus his æsthetic sense was associated with a keen taste for the beautiful, and with a quick perception of the ludicrous. Though dwelling amidst the most sublime devotional elevations, his oral and epistolary discourse on those mysterious topics was characterised by perfect simplicity and transparent clearness. With a well-stored memory, he was an independent, if not an original thinker. With deep and even vehement attachments, he knew how to maintain on fit occasions, even towards those whom he loved best, a judicial gravity and even a judicial sternness. He acted with indefatigable energy in the throng of men, and yet in solitude could meditate with unwearied perseverance. He was at once a preacher at whose voice multitudes wept or trembled, and a companion to whose privacy the wise resorted for instruction. In all the exigencies and in all the relations of life the firmest reliance might always be placed on his counsels (*Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography*, p. 165).

Sir J. Stephen had not known Mr. Venn personally, being but a child at the time of his death, but he had ample opportunities of hearing about him from many common friends at Clapham ; moreover, he had aided my father in reading and selecting the letters published in the *Life*.

As to his extraordinary personal charm, all those who met him seem to be agreed. His daughter Eling gives one or two anecdotes in illustration. He was on one occasion going to London from Yelling, and on getting into the coach found that the rest of the company consisted of officers in the army. They filled the air with the language which those of their profession were then supposed to have acquired in Flanders and elsewhere. Mr. Venn managed to convey his reproof with such a pleasant tact that they soon became excellent friends. "He began to talk to them on religious subjects for the rest of the journey. They listened to him with the greatest pleasure, and, when they parted, begged he

would recommend to them books to read. They took leave of him, saying it was the most agreeable journey they had ever taken." On another occasion, when staying with Lady Lowther, she was rather disturbed by suddenly hearing that her brother, Colonel Ramsden—a man strongly opposed to religion—was coming there. The Colonel at first treated the preacher with much haughtiness and reserve, but was at last fairly overcome by his conversation and manner. "Talk of the Methodists!" he said afterwards, "why, this Mr. Venn is one of the most agreeable men I was ever in company with."

Many hundreds of letters in his voluminous correspondence have been preserved, from which an excellent selection is given in the *Life*. They deal mainly with religious experience, but are constantly enlivened by shrewd comments on matters of everyday life. The following brief extracts are meant to supplement the published letters:—

1763, March 18.—Mr. Whitefield is here (Huddersfield) on his way to Scotland. The account he gives of the delusions, visions, and prophecies amongst Mr. Wesley's people in London is indeed quite deplorable.

1773, March 3.—The next time your wagon comes into the south, I shall be obliged to you to bring my candles. Please direct them to Mr. Gambier. (To his friend Mr. Whitaker, a Huddersfield merchant.)

1776, October 9.—I must not forget to tell you a good piece of news. Another clergyman, a Fellow of Clare Hall, invited me to supper, and I find his heart is all in a flame for Christ. He has been four years by himself and sought after wisdom from above, laying aside all other studies. (First reference to Mr. Berridge.)

1778, August 27.—Two miles beyond Epsom in going, a huge machine, called a land-frigate, coming down a gentle hill, ran foul of us, tore away part of our hinder wheel and broke in two the perch. The beam on which our carriage stood broke the glasses of every panel, locking us fast in against a high bank. Many deliverances wonderful to relate I have received, but none beyond this.

1778, January 31.—I was the more agreeably surprised at this instance of your regard, as I had just before determined to give a

schoolmaster £20 a year to teach all the children; and though able to contribute but a small part myself, I could trust for the remainder to the Christian love of my friends. (To Lady Mary Fitzgerald.¹)

1780, January 14.—Mr. Riland of Birmingham [formerly his curate at Huddersfield] has at last forsaken the standard of Polygamy, and betaken himself to the side of Christian decorum and decency again. Mr. Powley [also a former curate] has been instrumental in working his conversion, which does him the more honour, as he had a very weak though a very good man to deal with. [Mr. Riland had adopted Mr. Madan's views.]

1780, August 9.—I am glad to find that Mr. Madan's book is held in abhorrence. The fruits it will produce are dreadful. Mr. Madan sent me the book. (See p. 89.)

1780, September 21.—This morning set out on horseback with John [his servant] for Yorkshire, through Leicester, much reduced in flesh and strength through an ague which, with some few intermissions, continued from October 13, 1779, to July 10, 1780. The change of air and exercise in going, whilst there, and in returning by Birmingham and Leicester, God was pleased to bless to the restoring of my health and strength. But above all, by the drinking the chalybeate spring called Nilwell I returned on December 15, loaded with mercies.

1782, August 21.—Think of the impious audacity of the noted Mr. Horne (John Horne Tooke), once vicar of Brentford, now head-steward to Sir R. Barnard. Last Sunday but one he ordered all the tenants to wait upon him at the chief inn at Buckden, and did business with them during divine service.

1781, October 18.—Last Saturday, as my dear [wife] was riding behind me, the girth suddenly snapped in two, the pillion turned aside, and she has had a fall which has very violently strained her leg and ankle.

1784, August 5.—Nelly's letter I paid for, and I write this in a single sheet in case the Act takes place immediately. I shall ride over to Caxton to inquire, and if the frank will cover it, I shall rejoice, and send Kate's enclosed. If not, I must keep hers back; 1s. 4d. is too much for postage. It will be of little use to the Exchequer, but it will deprive his Majesty's good subjects of their mutual correspondence—an innocent pleasure.

1786, March 16.—(Referring to his daughter's attendance at a dance.) You remember I was once carried, without any intention of giving offence, to a concert, by Mr. Madan, and never was

¹ For many years one of his most valued correspondents. She was Lady Mary, daughter of John, Lord Hervey, and married Mr. Fitzgerald. Her son was the notorious Irish duellist, "Fighting Fitzgerald," executed for murder in 1786.

more serious and devout in my own thoughts than there. But great offence was taken. It was put in the papers, not by name, but strongly intimating who was present. Mrs. Wilberforce expressed her grief. So I paid for my want of thought.

1783, November 17.—You must remember always to *weigh* what you put into a frank, to see that it weighs less than two ounces. You put into your last one quarter of an ounce more, for which I had to pay 5s. 3d. (To a daughter.)

1794, February 16.—I received your second letter, informing me of the certain advice Government has received of the intended invasion of the French with 50,000 troops. I shall certainly with all pleasure receive your wife and dear branches. (To his son John, then rector of Clapham.)

1795, January 17.—I am much obliged to you for your having pity upon my poor, who have no help but from myself and through my friends. Never were they so brought into distress and want as now : yet patient and resigned even to surprise me. But six shillings a week ! In two or three houses are six, in one ten, children. And the parish allowance is so small they would literally be starved if they had no more. We have, I mean Jane and myself, found out an excellent means of feeding them by buying sheep's heads and dressing them, so that *one* will serve six families very well, and the cost is not more than two shillings. Some of the day-labourers who had only one coat, and that ready to drop off, are now warmly clad, and the women who were without any fit clothing have very warm petticoats. . . . Thirteen stone of very good cheese have been distributed, beside five chaldron of coals.

Henry Venn had five children, as follows:—

1. Eling, born at Clapham, February 7, 1758. She married, at Yelling, December 20, 1785, Mr. Charles Elliott, then of Bond Street, afterwards of Grove House, Clapham, and Westfield Lodge, Brighton. At the time that he made Mr. Venn's acquaintance Mr. Elliott was a young widower with four or five children. Mr. Venn found in him an affectionate son-in-law, and a strong sympathiser with his views. A number of letters addressed to Mr. Elliott will be found in the *Life*. There were eight children of the marriage ; of whom the best known were Henry, the popular minister for many years at St. Mary's Chapel, Brighton ; and Edward, also a clergyman at Brighton, and author of the *Horae Apocalypticae*. They were both Fellows of Trinity, Cambridge. Charles Elliott died October 15, 1832, and Mrs. Elliott, April 17, 1843.

2. John, born at Clapham, March 9, 1759 (see on).

3. Jane, born at Huddersfield, December 6, 1760. The devoted attendant on her father during his latter years, as she was, subsequently, of her brother and his family after the death of his wife. She must have been a very lively and intelligent girl in her youth, as indeed both her sisters were. She had lived so much in close intercourse with her father and his friends at Yelling, and had so often been on visits to the latter, and to relations, that she was to the last a storehouse of information about the family past. She could have handed down much that is now lost on such subjects, but unfortunately, like most young people, I cared but little for family annals in the days when I used to see her. Like other country-bred girls of the eighteenth century, she was primed with recipes for everything which home resources could supply. As a boy, I remember her at Hereford, when she was verging towards ninety, still active in her domestic management, in which department, I suspect, she rather distrusted the interference of her niece and nephew; and keenly interested in her garden, about which the niece and nephew cared nothing. I have a distant vision of her with her keys in her hand, unlocking her store-cupboard, in which were ranged rows of pickles and other home-made stores. In her youth, at Yelling, she was the recognised resource of the poor parishioners during their slighter maladies, and on every occasion on which what is now known as "first aid" was required. .

Our faithful Ruth, seized with a fit upon the staircase, fell down. She received a violent strain in her ankle, and a wound in her leg five inches in length, and the sight terrified the people. Jane became the surgeon, and undertook the cure with great resolution, for it was terrible to look at. We are now deprived of a cook, for our other maid did not so much as know how to spit a joint of meat. Jane undertook the business and succeeded.—(Letter from her father, 1795.)

She nursed her father during his last years. In 1803, after the death of her brother's wife, she kept house for him, and superintended the care of his family of seven young children. After the marriage and dispersion of

most of these she remained with her nephew and niece, John and Emelia, first at Pinner, and afterwards, till the close of her life, at Hereford. She died there July 1852, and was buried in St. Peter's Cemetery.

4. Frances Susannah; born at Huddersfield, October 6, 1763; died there, July 5, 1769, of consumption following on small-pox.

5. Catherine; born at Huddersfield, August 12, 1765. She married, at Yelling, November 23, 1790, James Harvey. He was a son of the Rev. Edmund Harvey, rector of Finningley, Notts. At the time of his engagement he was an undergraduate of Exeter College, Oxford, and was reading with Mr. Venn during his last long vacation. He graduated B.A. in 1791. He took holy orders, and was for a time curate to Mr. Venn's friend, Matthew Powley, at Dewsbury, but never held any preferment. He was, I believe, a kind husband and a dutiful son-in-law, and blameless in his private life; but he must have been a strange inmate in the family, and an extraordinary contrast to his brother-in-law, Charles Elliott. He is mainly remembered for his remarkable eccentricity. As my uncle John informed me, he was passionately fond of his horses, which he would sometimes bring into the dining-room and cause to walk round the table. He used to declare that his love of horses was all to the glory of God; and, pointing to one fine animal, would remark that it raised his feelings towards their common Creator to look at it. Mr. and Mrs. Harvey lived for many years at Caldecot,¹ Northhill, Beds, near Sandy, where his family had long owned property. Catherine Harvey died August 24, 1818; she and her husband were both buried at Northhill.

They had four children: a son Edmund, and three daughters, Susan, Sarah, and Elizabeth. Edmund was devoted to music, and was an admirable performer on the

¹ The old home of this branch of the Harveys, for some three centuries, was at Ickwellbury in Northhill. James Harvey's house at Caldecot (another hamlet in the same parish) has been long pulled down, and the site of it occupied by almshouses built in memory of her family by his daughter Elizabeth. Catherine Harvey is buried under an altar slab at the west end of the churchyard. The other members of the family were buried till 1863 in the church, and afterwards in a sort of chapel on the north side of the chancel.

violin. He inherited his father's eccentricity. I remember his occasional appearance at Highgate when I was a child, and his extreme oddity ; in particular the terror he displayed if he thought any one of us was likely to touch his favourite instrument—his wife, as he used to call it. He was full of quaint ways and stories, and was altogether as remarkable an ingredient in our family circle as his father must have been in that at Yelling. Neither he nor any of his sisters, who were all odd in their ways, ever married ; and the descendants of Catherine Venn came to an end at the death of the last daughter in 1884. For many years Edmund Harvey lived a secluded life with two of his sisters at Bury St. Edmunds, devoted to his music. Amongst their very few friends was George Borrow, whose portrait I first saw, as a lad, at their house. Elizabeth, the last survivor of the family, continued to reside at Bury till her death.

JOHN VENN OF CLAPHAM

To my grandfather, John Venn, we owe a large part of our family reminiscences. He was the first of our line to take any interest in genealogical inquiries. The *Parentalia* were begun by him, and carried down to his father's time; and without his industry, and his care in noting what he heard and remembered, many early facts would have been hopelessly lost. Of the main incidents in his life we have a complete account, for he kept a brief diary, or at least made notes of current events, from the time he entered college. In this, besides matters directly concerning himself, he recorded the marriages, deaths, etc., of his relations and friends, together with many other domestic details. Moreover, he seems hardly ever to have destroyed a letter—a duty to posterity which may possibly be overdone, but which had been unfortunately much neglected by those before him.

He was the second child, and the only son, of the last-mentioned Henry Venn. He was born at Clapham, March 9, 1759. His father was at the time curate of the parish, but had lately received the offer of the vicarage of Huddersfield; he only delayed his journey into Yorkshire to see the place until his wife was recovered. When John was between seven and eight years old he was sent to a school at Leeds, kept by a Mr. Shute,¹ where he remained for about three years. In 1769 he was sent to Hipperholme, near Halifax. The master of this grammar school was the Rev. Richard Sutcliffe,² vicar of Lightcliffe, who is

¹ Whilst at Mr. Shute's he made the acquaintance of the brothers Jowett, of whom we shall hear more presently.

² Probably the same who graduated M.A. at St. John's, Cambridge, in 1761. He was a native of Halifax.

described as an able classical scholar, and a diligent and skilful teacher. Here he made such progress that his father was strongly advised to send him to one of the large public schools. "Mr. Madan¹ earnestly presses to have him put to Westminster, but I know too well the state of the scholars there ever upon any worldly consideration to have him amongst them. I am then told that upon our principles this is a foolish fear. But I conceive that a Calvinist is as much bound to avoid snares and temptations, and to take care that his children should do so, as another man" (Letter to Mr. Kershaw). In 1773, when John Venn was fourteen, Mr. Sutcliffe's health failed, and pending other arrangements the boy was sent to Mr. Joseph Milner, the Church historian and master of Hull Grammar School, already alluded to (p. 89). Joseph Milner's brother,² then an undergraduate, afterwards Fellow and President of Queens' College, called for him at Yelling—where the family were then settled—on his way from Cambridge northwards; and in his charge the boy was conducted to Hull. But Mr. Milner was then probably too much engrossed in his History to give due attention to his scholars. The result was that, after some six months' tuition, when the boy returned home and was examined by his father, the latter was dismayed to find that he had seriously fallen back. He took him in hand himself for a time, and it is interesting to find that the laborious ministry of the vicar of Huddersfield had not caused him to forget his classical knowledge. "I have read [with him] much of Horace and some of Herodotus. I pity the poor boy. What trifling impertinent stuff is it to us! Yet so are things constituted there seems no other way of getting the knowledge of the languages" (July 18, 1774). He was again sent to Mr. Sutcliffe at Hipperholme, apparently as a private pupil, and after eighteen months returned home in July 1775, at the age of sixteen. His father again

¹ Something has been already said about Mr. Martin Madan (*v.* p. 89). Like his brother Spencer, the Bishop of Peterborough, he was an excellent scholar. They had both been trained at Westminster.

² There is a brilliant description of Isaac Milner in Sir James Stephen's *Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography* ("Clapham Sect").

“eagerly examined him, and was well satisfied with his advancement.”

At Christmas 1775 he finally left Hipperholme, and went to live with his father at Yelling, where he spent the greater part of the two years remaining before he was to enter College. His father again became his tutor. “I had great pleasure to find that he had applied himself closely to his studies at Hipperholme, and still more that *here* he was disposed to do the same. In half a year he has well translated Longinus, and six orations of Demosthenes; Hone’s *Elements of Criticism* — an excellent book to form the taste for just composition; Hooke’s *Roman History*; and the blessed Code, from Luke to Ephesians, which is our first work every morning for an hour. But as I could not teach him to *write* good Latin, and I feared he might be most defective there, I accepted dear Mr. Robinson’s¹ proposal, and he is now at Leicester with him for two months” (August 12, 1776). There he remained for several months, with such good results that he repeated the visit during the two following years. His father characteristically remarks, “I know that a good understanding, well informed by acquaintance with the best authors, adds great weight and authority to the teacher; and as dear Mr. Berridge (an excellent scholar himself) says, ‘Learning is a good stone to throw at a dog to stop his barking.’” Such instruction in mathematics as he then obtained was given by Mr. Ludlam,² at Leicester.

In October 1776 his father entered him at Cambridge, though he did not commence residence until a year later. His first intention had been to place his son at Trinity, but “the tutor and master were disinclined to admit him through fear of Methodism.” The Universities were at this time in a very low state, both as regards numbers

¹ Thomas Robinson (1749-1813), former Fellow of Trinity; a good classical scholar and mathematician. He was afternoon lecturer at All Saints’, Leicester, and afterwards, from 1778, vicar of St. Mary’s there. He was one of the early Evangelicals, and an intimate friend of Henry Venn.

² William Ludlam (1717-88), Fellow of St. John’s, and an excellent mathematician. He was rector of Cockfield, Suffolk, but for many years lived at his native town Leicester. He was one of the adjudicators appointed by the Government to decide upon the award of the prize of £20,000 for the best chronometer for nautical purposes. He had probably a considerable influence in encouraging young Venn’s tastes towards science.

and discipline, though the actual worst had been passed and things were beginning to mend. From his residence near Cambridge, Mr. Venn probably knew something of the condition there, and had some hopes that it might be better at Oxford. In a letter to his friend James Stillingfleet (February 17, 1775) he had asked, "I want to know the state of religion amongst the students there, and incline to send Jacky to that rather than my own neighbouring University. We are so bad that even some clergymen who are not over-serious almost scruple to send their sons, on account of the dissipation and extravagance raging there."

Sidney Sussex was the College selected, and this was probably as good a selection as could have been made under the circumstances, as Mr. Hey,¹ the tutor, enjoyed a very high reputation. Mr. Venn remained at home most of this year, under his father's guidance, whose strong religious views, combined with his keen common-sense, are displayed in the following remarks :—

We have begun at St. Luke, and are now at the end of Revelations. I shall then read with him the Old Testament. He bids fair to be as I should have him, a thorough scholar, and then know what a fool he is. He has read and translated six orations of Demosthenes and all Sophocles and is now in Pindar; and what pleases me, sees clearly what poor writers they are in comparison of some British ones.

He commenced residence at Sidney, October 23, 1777; having been elected to a scholarship, after several days' examination, April 18 of the same year. "Last week," says his father, "my son left me to reside in College, after near two years' stay in my house. I am not able to express my thankfulness for his good behaviour and application to

¹ John Hey (1734-1815), son of Richard Hey of Pudsey, Leeds. He was, probably, by far the best College tutor in Cambridge at that time. He was a brother of William Hey, a celebrated surgeon of Leeds (see p. 81), and of Richard Hey, LL.D., a barrister, and also a Fellow of Sidney. John Hey graduated B.A. at St. Catharine's, as eighth wrangler, in 1755; was elected Fellow of Sidney, and became tutor there from 1760 to 1779. He was rector of Passenham, Northants, and Norrisian Professor of Divinity, 1780-1795. His College lectures at Sidney, on Morality, were attended by students from outside the College,—probably an almost unexampled occurrence at that time,—William Pitt being at one time amongst his hearers. His professorial lectures on Divinity gained him great reputation. They were highly praised by Dr. T. Arnold for their learning and candour.

his studies. He is put under an admirable tutor, Mr. John Hey, who preached before the University without notes, a thing not known for these threescore years. He is very candid and very kind to my son." John Venn mentions in his Diary that he was examined at entrance in Homer, Longinus, Cicero, and Horace, by the tutor; and by another Fellow in Aristotle.

His life in College was of the usual uneventful kind appropriate to a studious and quiet man. His first two long vacations were mostly spent at Leicester, whither he returned for instruction in classics from Mr. Robinson, and in mathematics from Mr. Ludlam. He also, like other members of his family, travelled about a good deal, on visits to relations and friends. His reading during this time was very miscellaneous, and he found time for many pursuits outside the ordinary curriculum: history, science, etc. His remarkably methodical habit is shown by his note-books, some of which date from his early College days. They contain full notes of the subjects he was studying. One in particular contains many pages of astronomy, optics, hydrostatics, and mechanics, illustrated by exquisitely neat diagrams. These studies were carried on after he had taken the living of Dunham. Another folio is the "*New Common-Place Book*, on the plan recommended by John Locke, Esq.," published at Cambridge,¹ in 1777. This is crammed with extracts and notes on the books he read. Astronomy was one of his favourite subjects, and there are many pages of entries of the elements of altitude and azimuth of various stars. Another subject in which he took a keen interest was *shorthand*. He has given an analysis of some half-dozen different systems with examples: he finally decided on that of Gurney, in which he subsequently had his children instructed. He also took especial pains to cultivate a good style of reading and speaking. He afterwards, in later life, expressed keen regret, when speaking to his son,—probably mistakenly,—that he had not devoted

¹ This was one of the enterprises of Mr. Nicholson,—well known in Cambridge for many years as "Maps,"—who kept a sort of lending library of books in use by the students. There is a portrait of him in the University Library.

himself more completely to the regular studies of the place. It should be remembered that the commanding pre-eminence which the Mathematical Tripos assumed, and which it retained till far within living memory, had not been attained in that day. Every studious man read classics for a considerable part of his time. Probably Sidney, under Mr. Hey, was a very favourable specimen of a College, but the following extract from a letter by his father will show that systematic examination was by no means unknown in that day. "After studying Euclid all through, and Aristotle *Περὶ Ποιητικῆς*, and being examined 6 hours for 9 days successively, he got neither the mathematical nor the classical prize¹ in his own College. His antagonists had each a private tutor; yet I had the pleasure of receiving a letter from Mr. Hey that he thought, taking both together, classics and mathematics, he was the best."

Probably by "Euclid" his father meant—like some other people—mathematics generally, for this was a subject which had come up since his own day, at least as an important part of University education. The ancient system, though far decayed, was still more or less in vogue in his time: the new system, as yet only inchoate, may be said to have been in vogue in his son's day. He expresses his bewilderment at the change, in a letter written after his son had been a year at College: "I cannot say he studies now with me, except in the Greek Testament. In his other studies I have no more knowledge than an infant. Strange that mathematics should be all in all at College, and then, as soon as they learn it, they forget whatever they know, except the terms of the science."

John Venn was of too shy a disposition to make many friends at College, but amongst his intimates were several who afterwards became men of some mark. His closest friend in College was probably Francis J. H. Wollaston,² the

¹ The existence of classical and mathematical prizes—*i.e.* as rewards to undergraduates for their College studies, and assigned after examination—was, I suspect, a very rare thing at that day. Nothing of the kind was introduced at Caius till 1800.

² Francis Wollaston was a brother of the distinguished physicist Wm. H. Wollaston. He was elected to the Mastership of Sidney in 1807, but for some reason the election was set aside by the Visitor. Many of his letters to John Venn are preserved.

senior wrangler in 1783, and afterwards Professor of Experimental Philosophy. Others were William Farish,¹ Joseph and Henry Jowett,² and Christopher and William Atkinson.³ His friendship with Charles Simeon, continued through life and handed on to his sons, was not commenced till a short time before he left College. Each of the two has referred in his Diary to the event of their first meeting. Simeon says, referring to Mr. Atkinson:—

He introduced me the next day to an excellent man, my dear friend Mr. John Venn, who now, alas! is just deceased [written in 1813]. Here I found a man after my own heart, a man for whom I have retained the most unfeigned love to his last moments, and of whom I shall ever retain the most affectionate remembrance. He soon took me over to Yelling, and introduced me to a man of no ordinary character, his own dear and honoured father. Oh, what an acquisition was this!

Mr. Venn, in his brief Diary, says:—

1782, June 1: Drank tea at Atkinson's, with Simeon, an undergraduate fellow of King's, a religious man, and Jowett
June 2, Sunday: Drank tea with Jowett, Simeon, who preached his first sermon to-day at St. Edward's, and Atkinson.

A few weeks later Simeon paid his first visit to the man who so deeply influenced his future life. He thus refers to it in a letter to John Venn, written July 14, 1782—the quaint insistence on punctuality was very characteristic of him: “My dear friend, I propose, with the blessing of God, riding over to Yelling on Tuesday morning next before eight o'clock, or at the furthest a quarter after; to converse with your father has long been my desire.” John Venn, in turn, notes: “July 16, 1782: Mr. Simeon⁴ came at eight, and staid till half-past eight at night.”

¹ William Farish of Magdalene, a distinguished mathematician and mechanician. He succeeded Wollaston as Jacksonian Professor in 1813, holding the office until his death in 1837. We shall have more to say about him under Henry Venn.

² The Jowetts were Leeds men, whose acquaintance he had first made at Mr. Sutcliffe's school. Joseph was a graduate of Trinity, and Fellow and Tutor of Trinity Hall from 1775. He was Regius Professor of Civil Law, 1782-1813. For the last eighteen years of his life he was vicar of Wethersfield, Essex. He was a strong Evangelical, and one of the principal supporters of the Bible Society in Cambridge. It was to him that the well-known epigram about “the little garden little Jowett made” was applied. Henry Jowett was of Magdalene, and succeeded John Venn as vicar of Little Dunham.

³ Christopher Atkinson of Trinity, fifth wrangler 1778, afterwards Fellow of Trinity Hall.

⁴ It is worth adding a third, independent, account of an interview which had such a considerable effect upon Simeon himself, and, through him, on the Church of England.

The following brief notes from the Diary give some account of his habits and tastes during the time of his stay in College:—

December 19, 1777 : Went home for the vacation. December 30 : Returned to Cambridge [apparently the ancient custom of holders of scholarships residing during most of the vacation was still kept up]. January 17, 1778 : Mr. Daw gave me an electrical machine. August : Aurora Borealis frequent and vivid this year. April 6 : Annual examination at Sidney for a week. August 10 : Leicester, drawing in crayons and under Mr. Ludlam. August 29 : Saw a boy in the hydrophobia, bit by a cat a month ago which he had irritated ; he died the next day. On Bardon Hill¹ saw Lincoln Cathedral, Derby, Newark, Lichfield, Warwick churches, Nottingham, Birmingham, Melton, the Wrekin, Belvoir Castle : nine counties. September 22 : Left Leicester at one in the morning, to Market Harborough ; thence walked to Yelling (some thirty-eight miles), except from Kettering to Thrapstone, nine miles. December 31 : Kicked on my right leg by a horse while coursing at Southborough. In the night the most violent gale of wind which has been known for many years ; the stack of chimneys over my room in College blown down ; a pane of glass in Hardy's room full of holes like a sieve by the gravel of the walk being blown through it. 1779, May 1 : Purchased a boat from Simson the builder. May 24 : Went with W. Farish in my boat, intending to go to St. Ives ; stopped by want of water six miles from Ely ; walked back from Ely to Cambridge. June 1 : Walked to Ely with my cousin Gambier, brought boat from Ely to Mepal ; rowed to Huntingdon, thence to Paxton.² October 12 : Returned to Cambridge, the boat brought from Yelling in a wagon. October 23 : Went in canoes up the Cam to Hauxton, with Gambier and Wollaston [the only early reference I have seen to the use of "canoes"]. November 11 : Bought at St. Ives a large boat twenty feet long, with Wollaston and R. Pointer. 1780, February 27 : Cooke of King's preached before the University : an excellent sermon, memoriter. May, 15 : Went with Wollaston to

It is from the young lady's point of view. "When Mr. Simeon paid us his first visit at Yelling, it is impossible to conceive anything more ridiculous than his look and manner were. His grimaces were beyond anything you can imagine. So, as soon as we were gone, we all got together into the study, and set up an amazing laugh" (Reminiscence of his daughter Eling). For this outbreak they received an affectionate but decided reproof from their father.

¹ Bardon Hill, in Charnwood Forest. From its isolated position, and the flatness of the surrounding country, it is said to command the most extensive view in England (*v. Nichols, Leicestershire*, III. i. 126).

² On the Ouse, about three or four miles from Yelling. It seems to have been what may be called the "port" for that neighbourhood in the days before railways. When Henry Venn moved from Huddersfield he mentions there being "water-communication" between the two places.

St. Ives to take our great boat up to Paxton. July 7 : Went to London with my father. July 11 : Went in the Margate Hoy with my uncle Gambier, to Margate. August 11 : Sailed on the Thames with Wollaston to Mortlake in a large sailing-boat, and had a most narrow escape under Chelsea Bridge. 1781, January 15 : Went into the Senate House to be examined for my degree of B.A. : 6th junior op. : ought to have been senior op.,¹ next to Wigglesworth : such partiality that private tutors were abolished. February 7 : Began to study Hebrew. May 8 : Examination for Fellowships : Coulthurst and Munnings elected : promise of electing me next time.

Here again he met with undeserved ill-luck. The Master and some of the Fellows assured him of his speedy election ; made him a member of the Combination room, gave him a key of the garden, etc., in anticipation. But a violent dispute arose amongst some of the Fellows, as was not uncommon in earlier days, and the unfortunate candidate was passed over by mutual agreement.

June : Arranging the books in the new College library with the Master. July 7 : Went to Yelling for the long vacation ; beginning to study Hebrew. July 25 : Met Wollaston and Middleton, and spent a day on Whittlesea Mere.² September 20 : Went to Cambridge to assist the Master in arranging the library. 1782, January 18 : Studying Hebrew under Mr. Ormerod, and making a catalogue of pamphlets in Sidney library. May 20 : Illumination for Rodney's victory. May 29 : Examination for Fellowships ; my election deferred by a quarrel between H—— and C—— (Heyand Coulthurst?). June 1 : Commenced acquaintance with Simeon of King's. June 6 : Election of Fellows post-

¹ Explanations why a man did not get a better place in an examination are usually of little value. But in this case there seems no doubt that my grandfather was hardly treated. His assigned place in the Tripos, as Professor Farish himself assured my father in later years, was far below his real merit. This was partly attributed to his own diffidence, but largely also to the pushing interference in behalf of their respective pupils of the private tutors, who actually pestered the examiners in their favour. In this year, 1781, the abuse had risen to a great height. So serious was the scandal, indeed, that a Grace was passed in the Senate, by a large majority, to prohibit candidates for honours from reading with private tutors during their last two years. It should be remembered that at that time the examiners did not at once publish their list in a final order of merit, but put out a provisional list of numerous classes, or "brackets" as they were called, the men in each of which generally fought it out afterwards amongst themselves. This preliminary arrangement into brackets left a considerable opening for choice or luck.

² Whittlesea Mere was long a well-known resort for those who loved rowing and sailing, and also for entomologists ; it was the last British haunt of the extinct "Great Copper" butterfly. It was the largest of a group of shallow lakes in a depression of the fen district near Ramsey, Hunts. It was drained at the time the Great Northern Railway was made, about 1850 ; in fact the line crosses part of the site of it near Yaxley station.



JOHN VENN, M.A.
From Sketch by J. Downman, 1782.

poned *sine die*. July 25 : Returned to Yelling ill in a post-chaise, and went to bed. August 12 : Dr. Glynn¹ attended me : in a nervous fever. September 1 : Extremely feeble and debilitated. September 23 : Mr. Downman² took my portrait in chalk. December 21 : Finally left College, giving up my room to Mr. Lettice.

This seems a convenient place to give some account of his personal appearance, tastes, habits, etc. The following particulars are mostly gathered from the recollections of my uncle, John Venn.

In stature he was rather below medium height, about five feet seven inches or thereabouts, and slender during his youth, though in after life he became somewhat corpulent. The portrait referred to above is in my possession. It is a small one, representing him after Downman's fashion, in profile, as a rather handsome, fine-featured young man. He is dressed in the somewhat elaborate style which custom then required at College hall, with his hair carefully powdered. The illness to which he alludes on leaving College seems to have been the commencement of a permanent liability to feverish attacks from which he suffered throughout his life. They became worse in later life, and he was several times laid by from parochial work ; on one occasion for the greater part of a year. This, combined with some degree of pecuniary pressure, was probably the cause of what seems, by comparison with the other members of his family, a somewhat anxious and depressed type of character.

He was a man of strong mechanical and scientific tastes (I still possess instruments which must have belonged to him ; *e.g.* a Dollond telescope, sextant, chronometer watch, dividing compasses). Though not in any way an original investigator, or with much philosophical capacity, he had a decided taste for trying practical experiments.

As a young man he was, as we have seen, extremely

¹ Robert Glynn, M.D., Fellow of King's College. He practised as a physician in Cambridge.

² John Downman, a portrait painter of the day ; died 1824. He was resident in Cambridge for several years from about 1777. His portraits are mostly in profile (*q. D.N.B.*).

fond of boating, and acquired the nickname of "The Admiral of the Cam." It need hardly be said that no boat-clubs of the modern kind were then in existence, and that boating generally consisted in sailing rather than rowing. My uncle John used to tell me that his father built a boat of his own in his College rooms; but that, like Crusoe before him, he found, when it was finished, that it was too large to be moved—at least by the door. His taste for scientific instruments once stood him in good stead. This was on the occasion of a visit to Plymouth, whither he had been to escort a young pupil¹ and friend to his ship. A thick fog sprang up as the boat was returning to shore. Mr. Venn consulted his pocket compass—a very unusual thing, presumably, for travellers to carry in those days—and declared they were going out to sea. The sailors naturally stood to their own view, and it was some time before they would give in and consent to be guided by a passenger.

The same taste showed itself in little matters of domestic management,—new grates, lighting appliances, etc.,—often rather to the dismay of his very shrewd and practical sister Jane, who kept house for him after the death of his first wife. On one occasion, having heard of some new kind of cooking-stove, the invention of the famous Rumford, he must needs get one, and, what was more, ask a party to dinner on the first occasion of its being put into operation. The machine broke down, driving the cook to distraction. He must have been amongst the very first private persons to resort to Jenner's great discovery,² for he has left it recorded amongst his diary notes—after duly mentioning how his children were inoculated for small-pox from 1792 onwards—

1800, September 1: Caroline and Maria vaccinated. October 7: Agreed upon a plan of vaccinating the parish: vaccination just introduced.

¹ Samuel Thornton, afterwards an admiral, father of the present Mr. P. M. Thornton, member for the Clapham division of Surrey. He had had an appointment to the *Shannon* (according to my uncle's recollection), but had somehow missed his ship. When the news came of the great fight with the *Chesapeake* the poor boy nearly broke his heart at having missed the chance.

² Jenner's first actual experiment of vaccination was in 1796, but his treatise on the subject was not published until June 1798.

It was characteristic of his care in recording all matters of interest, that in the same notes he gives the dates of the attacks of measles and whooping-cough in the case of each of his children.

The parish register of Little Dunham is an illustration of his care in such matters. He started a new register on his arrival, in which the entries are made with unusual fulness; *e.g.* in the entries of baptism and burial he gives the profession or trade of the father, and the maiden name of the mother; in those of burial, the age and not unfrequently the cause of death. He has prefixed to this register seven or eight pages dealing with the history of the parish, including a list of the rectors, lords of the manor, notes about the parsonage, etc.

To the last he took a keen interest in the studies of his son Henry, who was reading at Cambridge with Professor Farish preliminary to entering College. In a letter of March 18, 1813, he enters into the details of his studies, with much acute advice,—this was only three months before his death,—adding:—

I have borrowed a Wood's Algebra, that I may follow you page by page, and on Monday I shall expect the register of the fortnight's work. . . . You must do innumerable examples, and set yourself many to do. . . . I would send you Bonnycastle's Algebra if I could find it . . . he abounds in examples. Wood is, I think, deficient in them, and I attribute very much the little progress I made in the higher parts of algebra to the difficulty which I found from not being well versed in the technical operations. . . . Do you assist the Professor [Farish] to take down his models and to put them up? Make yourself well acquainted with the principles of machinery, which a little practice in this way will soon teach you.

He was interested throughout life in heraldry, and indeed in all branches of antiquarian knowledge. As he says himself, "When I was yet a boy I had a passion for looking into books of heraldry, particularly with a view of discovering some records of my own family." In a letter to his cousin, Robert Jarratt, containing a minute list of inquiries which he wished to have made concerning the family of Venns once resident at Lydeard St. Laurence, Somerset, he says, "You see I am making an antiquarian

of you at once. You learned at my house to read old writings, and it is a pity I should not give you some practice." Amongst other things he acquired the art of writing shorthand ; apparently by some insertions in his Diary and his analysis of several different systems, he must have begun this at an early age ; in fact soon after his entry at College. When at Clapham he had a teacher in this art for his children. The girls in particular acquired great facility in its use, one of them obtaining some prize on the first occasion on which she succeeded in taking down one of his sermons without omission of a word. They used it habitually,¹ in writing to one another, throughout their lives, as did, and do, several of the generations which followed them.

With this love of experiment was perhaps connected his over-readiness to try new investments in mining and other enterprises. These mostly turned out ill, and it was partly in consequence of this that his circumstances were considerably straitened during the latter part of his life. Hence he was induced for some years to take a few pupils into his house. Two sons of Sir Thomas Baring were amongst these ; of whom one, Francis, afterwards became Lord Northbrook, and remained a life-long friend of my father. When at his first parish, Dunham, he had taken two or three pupils ; of whom the most distinguished were the Grants,² Charles and Robert.

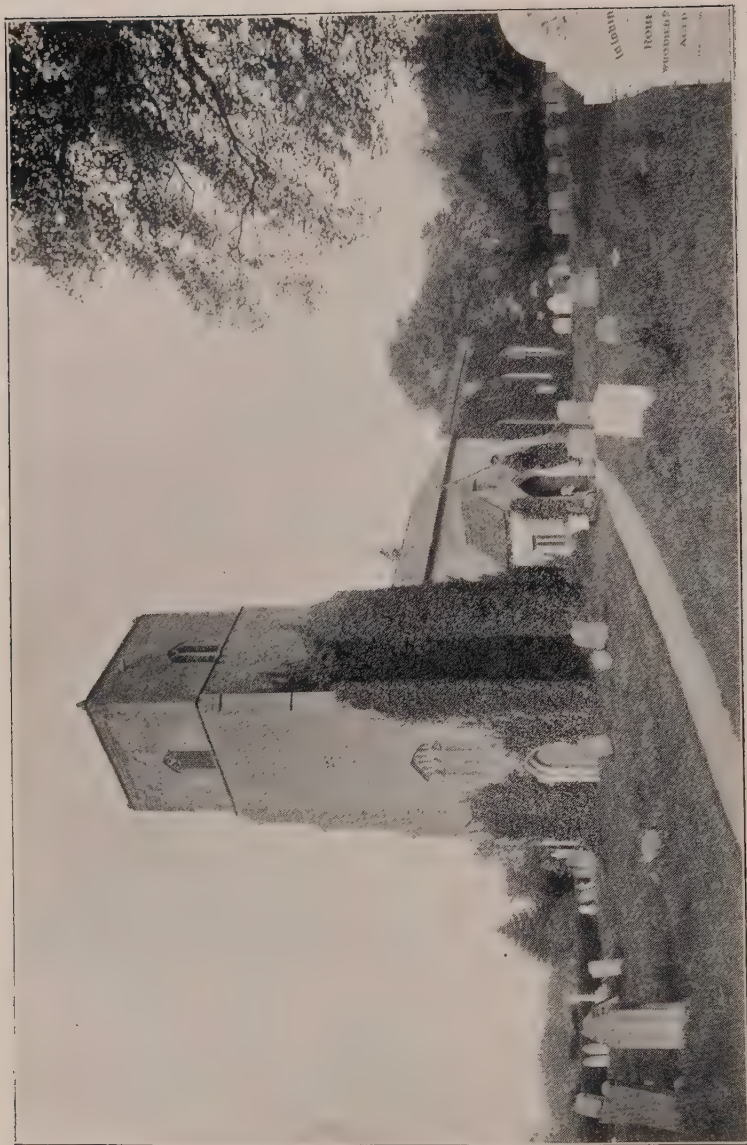
John Venn was ordained deacon at Buckden, near Yelling, one of the principal residences of the Bishops of Lincoln, September 22, 1782. He preached his first sermon at his father's church the Sunday following. He remained on in College, as we have seen, for one term after his ordination, as there seemed a reasonable expectation of his being elected a Fellow. On December 31 he finally left College, and began clerical work as curate to his father

¹ The system adopted was the once popular one of Gurney. The plan has its drawbacks in its relation to family records, as we have many hundreds of letters which posterity will never care to decipher.

² Charles Grant afterwards became Lord Glenelg. He was for some years Secretary of State for the Colonies. Robert was Governor of Bombay ; knighted in 1834. Their father, Charles Grant, was a distinguished Indian civilian, M.P. for Inverness-shire. In later life he resided at Clapham, where he was an intimate friend of Mr. Venn, and a sharer in the various religious and philanthropic schemes of the place. The two young Grants graduated with very high honours at Cambridge.



LITTLE DUNHAM CHURCH AND RECTORY.
From Sketch by Miss C. E. Venn, about 1822.



LITTLE DUNHAM, 1901.

at Yelling. He very soon, however, had an offer of a living, namely, that of Little Dunham, near Swaffham, Norfolk, then in the patronage of Mr. Edward Parry.¹ Mr. Parry, having once heard him preach at Camberwell, was so struck with the sermon that he offered him the living at once. Here, according to his own statement, he was the first resident clergyman for seventy-five years. He was ordained priest by Dr. Halifax, Bishop of Gloucester, at the King's Chapel, St. James's, and was instituted two days later. Dunham was a small parish. He has recorded in the register—with his customary minuteness—the population as consisting of “53 men, 47 women, and 72 children; 172 in all” (it now contains about 255). The church, though small, is not without interest. The tower dates from about 1440, and probably most of the present building is of about the same date. Externally—to judge from a pencil sketch probably by him or his sister—it has not perceptibly undergone any alteration. Internally, it has been re-seated and the roof renewed. It consists of a nave, chancel, and north aisle. The following notes from his Diary refer to his life at Dunham :—

1783, August 19 : Began to build four rooms to the parsonage.
 November 16 : Preached at the Cathedral, before the bishop. 1784,
 March 14 : Preached at Cambridge for Mr. Simeon. April 13 :
 Taken ill with fever. April 24 : Recovery, and able to ride a little.
 July 9 : Preserved unhurt when my saddle slipped under the horse's
 belly whilst galloping. July 28 : My sister Eling came to live with
 me. Nov. 16 : Began to have public family prayers twice a week
 for my parishioners at my house. 1785, March 20 : Preached, by
 appointment of the bishop, a charity sermon at St. Andrew's,
 Norwich. May 25 : Mr. Simeon visited me for three days.
 December 15 : Little Crotch,² the musical genius, at Mr. Israel's
 at Cambridge. 1786, May 10 : Preached at the archdeacon's
 visitation at Litcham. 1789, May 4 : Set out for Hull, and arrived

¹ Mr. Parry was a retired Indian civilian. His wife was a daughter of Mr. Henry Vansittart, Governor of Bengal. He had recently (1782) bought the manor and advowson of Little Dunham, where he built a new mansion. Being dissatisfied with the ministry of the rector, he bought him out in order to secure some one who would be a better worker in the parish and a more congenial preacher. He was a friend of the Thorntons, and afterwards connected with them by the marriage of his daughter to Mr. John Thornton. He was elected Chairman of the East India Company. Died 1828.

² William Crotch, the well-known English composer; born at Norwich, 1775. He was remarkable for his extraordinary precocity as a performer.

on the 6th ; saw Miss King [his future wife] on the 7th. May 23 : Embarked on board the *Aurora*, Captain Seagar, for Lynn ; arrived there on the 28th.

As we have already seen, he had almost a passion for the sea, and generally went by water to and fro between Dunham and Hull. His father, alluding to his return, says, "Your brother has been at Mr. Stillingfleet's at Hotham, and returned by sea to Lynn ; was a week nearly in the passage,"—the distance is about seventy-five miles,— "but very much delighted, though the wind was high."

July 27 : Rode to Lynn, and embarked on board the *Aurora* for Hull, where I arrived on the 30th.

The following is his description of his establishment at Dunham in his bachelor days :—

You will inquire what is my household. I have six acres of land, in the middle of which stands my house ; a parlour, a kitchen, a brewhouse, and a spare bed for a friend ; a maid, a boy ; a horse, a cow, and two kittens. My cow furnishes me with milk and butter. I bake and brew for myself, and live in as comfortable a manner as I can desire.—(Letter to his cousin, John Brasier.)

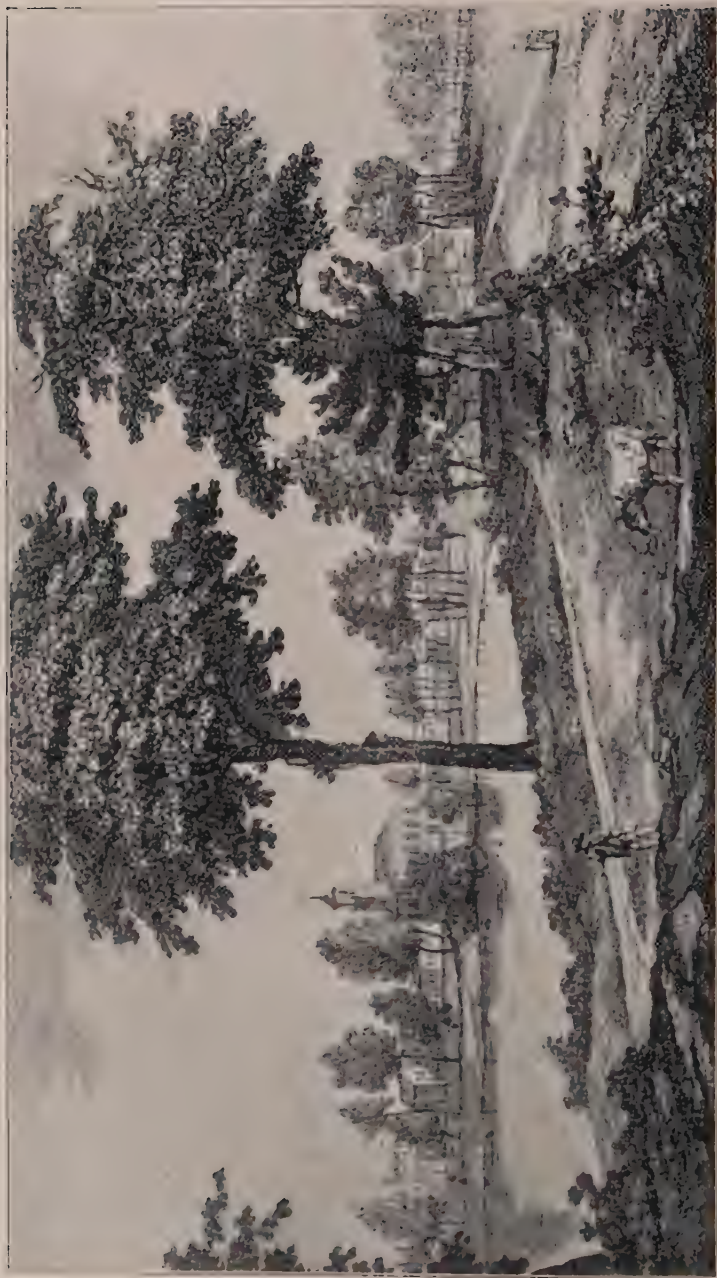
His rectory house was already a somewhat old one. He speaks of it as being built of "stud-work" originally, which had been converted into brick in 1731. In 1783 he enlarged it, by adding at the south end "a parlour, study, and two bedrooms over, of the same size, and a cellar under." The value of the living, after necessary deductions, was about £140 a year.

It may be added that a clerical society which he started when at Dunham recently celebrated its hundredth anniversary.

On October 22, 1789, he was married, at Trinity Church, Hull, to Katharine, only daughter of William King, a merchant of that town. Some account of her family is given in the Appendix.

1790, January 16 : Appointed chaplain to the dowager Lady Hereford. March 17 : Lady Smythe died, leaving me the advowson of Bidborough,¹ Kent. May 31 : Left Dunham with

¹ Bidborough, about two or three miles N.W. of Tunbridge Wells. Lady Smythe was the widow of Sir Sidney Stafford Smythe, Chief Baron of the Exchequer, through



View of CLAPHAM from the Common!
-1784-

Kitty [his wife], and sailed to Hull from Wells, in the *Hopeful*, Captain Wells. July 16: Returned to Dunham by sea, Captain Seagar, by way of Lynn. September 27: Master Grants came to be under my tuition [see back, p. 124]. 1792, November 20: K. [his daughter Katharine] inoculated for the small-pox.

In the summer of 1792 he was offered the living of Clapham by his family friend Mr. Thornton. It is, of course, with this place that his name is chiefly associated. He was instituted June 8, but did not leave Dunham until March 18, 1793. The circumstances of his appointment were as follows. John Thornton of Clapham, his father's wealthy and generous friend, owned the advowson or presentation of eleven livings at the time of his death. These he had bought from time to time, with the same object which Mr. Simeon afterwards carried out on such a large scale, viz., in order to secure the ministry of sound and pious clergymen. By his will, proved in 1790, he placed these livings in the hands of a body of clerical trustees, John Venn being one of these, with directions that they should appoint one of themselves, or some other person of similar views. In the case of Clapham, the most important, probably, of these livings, he directed that it should be offered first to Mr. Henry Foster,¹ and secondly to Mr. Venn. Mr. Foster very generously declined it for himself, and accordingly Mr. Venn was appointed. It was reckoned at that time as worth about £400 a year.

We have already said something about Clapham in Henry Venn's time, and will therefore merely remark that a considerable change had taken place in the course of thirty-three years. So far from a few rich people constituting almost the whole population, there were now many poor, the total number of inhabitants² being about

whose influence his father had been appointed to Yelling. Both she and her husband were well-known supporters of Evangelical views. The Smythe family had a residence at Bidborough. Mr. Venn never had a presentation to the living, and in 1813 it was bought of him by his brother-in-law Charles Elliott.

¹ There is some account of Mr. Foster in the *Life of John Fawcett, D.D.* (published 1818). He was a Yorkshireman, a graduate of Queen's College, Oxford. He was for a time curate to Romaine at Blackfriars, and held several lectureships in London. He was rather celebrated as a preacher. The name of Samuel Thornton is given as having actually presented Mr. Venn to the living.

² Lysons gives the population as 2477 in 1788. He adds that it had increased more rapidly than that of any other parish within his knowledge.

2600. Henry Venn's old church had been nearly all removed, but the north aisle was left, and served as a mortuary chapel. John Venn's church was the present one, on the Common. It stands now very much as it did on its erection, when the vestry, with a shrewd conviction of what they wanted and what they felt sure they could secure, resolved to have "a new strong church¹ built." It was opened for service June 10, 1776, having cost £11,000, and containing sittings for 1411 persons. The portico was added in 1812.

One is sometimes apt to suppose that the life of a country parson in the eighteenth century must have been monotonous and dull, owing to the bad roads and to the great lack of posts and all the other modern means of communication. The life at Yelling and at Dunham was doubtless somewhat exceptional, but it serves to show that dulness was neither necessary nor universal. Summer and winter alike, in those pre-railroad days, the stream of visits and of visitors seems never to have quite dried up. For example, in 1787 there are references to nine visits which John Venn paid to various friends and relations, one of his journeys being into Yorkshire; besides about nine visits paid by his friends to him. There was no opportunity for the acquiring of that coating of rust which fiction sometimes suggests must have been constantly thickening upon the mind and habits of the country parson of the day.

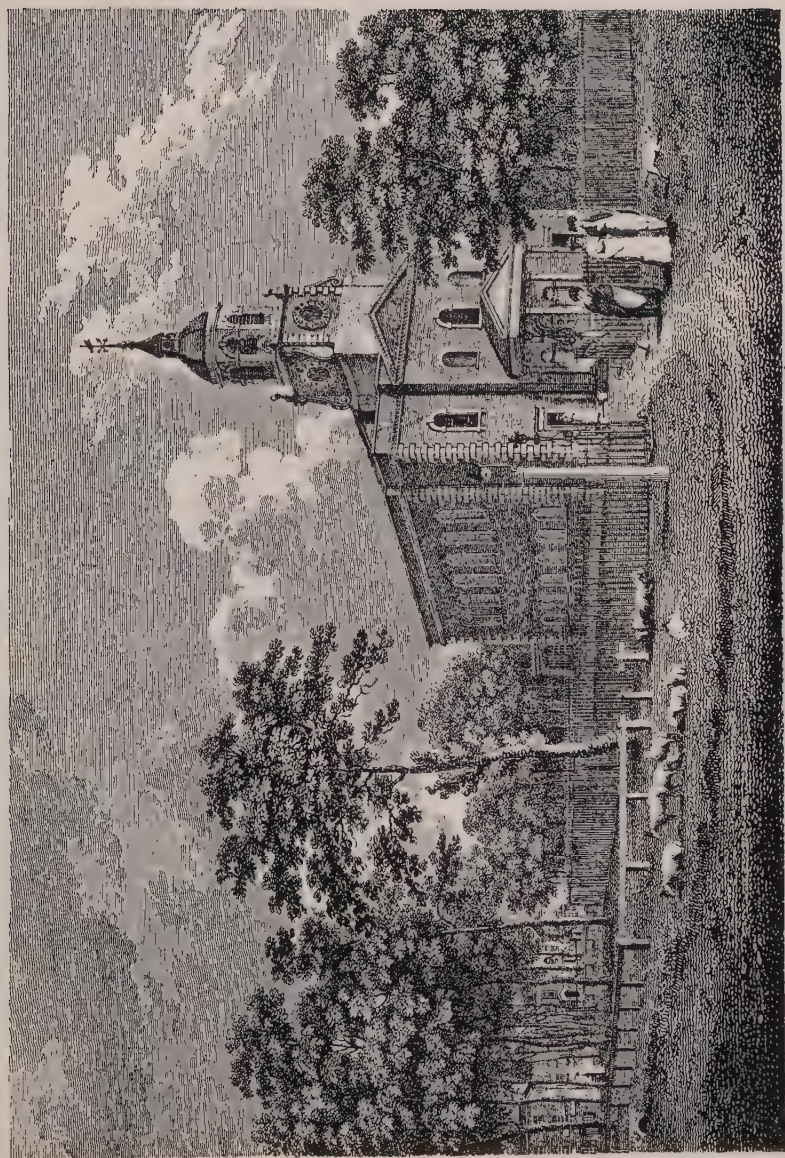
The following notes from his Diary refer to his life during the time at Clapham :—

1793, July 9: Set out on a journey to Bath, etc., with Mr. Wilberforce; Hannah More's,² Piercefield,³ etc. July 27: Returned by coach; escaped being robbed. July 31: Returned to Bath, drinking the waters. 1794, April 19: An evening lecture begun at the old church [see on, p. 132]. 1795, June 4: Thrown from my horse by his falling on Finchley Common, and much

¹ There is a good view of it, taken from behind, as it appeared in 1809, in *Churches in the Environs of London*, published by William Miller in 1811. The view here given is reproduced from a sketch taken for Mr. Venn shortly before his death. It stands exactly as it did then, except that now (1902) a chancel is being added at the east end.

² Hannah More lived for many years at Barley Wood in Wrington, near Bristol. She was a personal friend of Mr. Venn. A long letter from him is published in W. Roberts' *Memoirs* of her (iii. 321). We have a number of her letters to him.

³ Piercefield on the Wye, well known for its magnificent rock scenery.



CLAPHAM CHURCH, 1812.

From Engraving of a Sketch by Miss Bellamy.

bruised [he was returning from Yelling]. June 7: Organ opened at Clapham church. June 9: Mrs. Dewar has sent me some oranges just imported from Spain, and my wife immediately set about packing them up to send to Yelling. 1796, October 19: Went with C. Elliott, junior, to Winchester, Southampton, Salisbury, Bath, where I stayed to drink the waters till November 18. 1797, January 4: My dear father began to occupy his hired house adjoining to mine at Clapham [he had just retired from Yelling; he died at Clapham on June 24 following]. August 22: Went by water to Margate to meet my wife. September 7: Returned home with my wife by Dover, Romney, and Cranbrook. 1798, March 27: Jane, Emelia, and Henry [his children] inoculated for the small-pox. 1799, August 21: Went in a chaise with Mr. T. Thompson to Hull. September 24: Left Hull and returned home by Hotham [Rev. J. Stillingfleet], York, Whitwell [Rev. George King, his brother-in-law], the Temple¹ [Babingtons]. 1800, September 1: Caroline and Maria vaccinated. October 7: Agreed upon a plan of vaccinating the parish; vaccination just introduced. 1801, September 1: Set out on a journey into Wales, to visit Mr. H. Bewicke; made a tour by Neath, Swansea, Bath. 1802, August 12: Went to Brighton on horseback; returned August 19. August 25: Set out on horseback with Mr. Elliott on a journey to Yorkshire. September 30: Returned to Clapham, and in a week taken ill with a serious return of fever, by which I was long laid aside from duty and brought very low. 1803, April 15: On this day my beloved partner was removed to a better world, leaving me with seven children to mourn my irreparable loss. April 24: My dear sister Jane came to undertake the care of my family. June 21: Set out with my sister for Cheltenham in a single-horse chaise, being still laid aside from all duty and in a very bad state of health. July 21: Left Cheltenham and went to Bath. August 11: Went to Hannah More's [Barley Wood, near Bristol], Bridgwater, Wellington [where his cousin Robert Jarratt was vicar], Lydeards [to make genealogical inquiries concerning the family of John Venn, the regicide], Wells, etc., returning to Bath. September 5: Left Bath much better in health, Salisbury, Southampton, Portsmouth, Chichester, Arundel, etc., to Brighton. September 26: Returned to Clapham after an absence of three months. 1804, December: Instituted to the sinecure rectory of Great Tey, Essex; patron, Samuel Thornton, Esq. 1805, June 4: Preached a missionary sermon at St. Ann's, Blackfriars. July 5: Shopkeepers signed a resolution not to open shops on Sunday. Course of lectures on Liturgy. November 13: At Barley Wood, Mrs. Hannah More's, for a few days.

¹ Rothley Temple, the well-known family seat of the Babingtons of Leicestershire. For a picturesque description of it see Sir G. Trevelyan's *Life of Lord Macaulay*.

When on his journeys Mr. Venn generally either kept a diary or wrote home full accounts of what he did and what he saw. The following brief extracts refer to a journey undertaken with his nephew, Charles Elliott, in 1796 :—

Wednesday, October 19.—At 1/2 past 11 we set out upon our journey, Charles equipped with a formidable pair of pantaloons. What they are will probably not be known 20 years hence, and as I hope my journal will endure to that time, it is necessary to inform my reader of that age that they are an immense pair of small cloaths, made of thick cloth and leather, which button over the other cloaths from the breast down to the ankle, in order to keep the waistcoat, boots, etc., clean. . . . I am afraid when we have got beyond Salisbury the boys will hoot us.

The weather was beautifully fine ; unfortunately the road was a deep puddle up to the horse's fetlock, through which we were obliged to wade slowly and with great caution, looking back every moment to avoid the splashes of some chaise and four dashing through it as if to insult our unprotected state. Beyond Hammer-smith we met the King coming to town. Two soldiers with drawn swords rode first. These were followed by two footmen. Then came the Post-chaise drawn by six horses, in which was his Majesty in a brown bob-wig. I only caught a glimpse of him, but it gave me pleasure to see him look so well. The chaise was followed by a troop of horse, about twenty with drawn swords, and two footmen closed the procession.

At length, after wading through seas of mud, and being splashed by it in our upper parts, and plaistered in our lower, we came to Hounslow, 10 miles from town, where we were well regaled by a comfortable room and a roast fowl.

The weather still proved fine, and therefore at 1/2 past 3 we set out again, with the prospect of cleaner roads through the remainder of our journey. The extensive heath of Hounslow opens as soon as you leave the village. It is a dead flat, extending several miles in length and breadth.

When we reflect upon the vast quantity of land uncultivated in England, even within a few miles round the Metropolis, it cannot but excite astonishment. Yet while many only blame it as a piece of shameful neglect, I own ideas of a more pleasing kind suggest themselves to me. I consider them as holding out a striking proof of the respect which has been paid in this land of freedom to private property. . . . They are the stores of national wealth laid up for time of need. By and by, I figure to myself, here will be neat farm-houses, there beautiful gardens, here

verdant meadows, there luxuriant crops of corn. The country continues flat till you get beyond Staines. You then ascend a fine hill which commands a most extensive prospect. Here we passed by Runnymede. . . . as it grew dusk we pushed briskly on for 6 miles over a wide heath, with scarcely a house, a tree, or a shrub,—fine room for the improvements of the next generation,—till we came to Bagshot, 26 miles from London, where I am writing this, not at all fatigued with a journey of near 36 miles.

October 20.—This morning we rose at 7 and proceeded on our journey. The country between Bagshot and Farnham, our next stage, possesses the same features as that which we travelled through last night: rude, dreary, barren heaths, which way soever the eye turned. In the midst, however, of this barren waste we were surprised and delighted to meet with a fine navigable canal, which appears to be very lately made, and which will be highly useful if ever any steps should be taken to cultivate the heath.

About 2 miles from Farnham we ascended a steep hill, and there were delighted to see an entire change of country,—in every part highly cultivated and wooded. We saw here a larger quantity of hop grounds than we had ever seen before, many fields of 20 and 30 acres being composed of them. [Then follows a long description of the bishop's palace at Farnham.]

Two things we observed the whole of our way through the county [of Hampshire]: 1st. the neatness of their farms and especially the hedges; 2nd. the care taken of the teams, the harnessing of the horses being remarkably neat, with long tails curiously buckled up, and a set of bells hanging over the neck of each horse. However agreeable the jingling of the bells may be to the horses, I cannot say they are so to the traveller.

We dined at Alton, and after dinner rode to Winchester, 16 miles, the last 5 or 6 nearly in the dark.

October 22 (Southampton).—I believe I told you that it was our intention to have gone this morning by the Packet boat, which always sets out at 7 o'clock, to the Isle of Wight. We breakfasted early and went down to the water side for that purpose, but unfortunately it was a dead calm, so that the Packet boat was not able to sail. The mail was therefore put on board a small open boat which was crowded with passengers, and was to be rowed to the Isle (12 miles) and back.

Bath, October 26.—Yesterday we got to Bath after a very pleasant journey (from Salisbury), by which I have evidently been so much strengthened as to be able to ride three times as far as I could without fatigue.

We have taken Hazard's Lodgings which were disengaged.

The rate of payment here is established by general custom, $1\frac{1}{2}$ a guinea per week for each room, and 18s. per week for boarding: tea, wine, coals, and candles not included. Coals cost 3s. 6d. per week. We have an excellent sitting-room and 2 good bedrooms.

I have reason to thank God that I think this journey will be of considerable service to me. I am very regular in my habits: I rise between 6 and half past: at $1\frac{1}{2}$ past 7 I drink the waters, and walk with Dr. Bridges till $1\frac{1}{2}$ past 8: at 9, breakfast, etc. I ride every day at 12, and walk out in the afternoon.

On Sunday morning I went to hear Mr. Jay¹ and was extremely pleased with him. I intend to hear him again on Thursday evening and on Sunday evening, and it is not without much difficulty and calling in to my assistance all my High Church principles that I shall keep to the Church of England in the morning. He is indeed a wonderful man, and I think is confessedly the first in point of abilities amongst the serious ministers.

Soon after his arrival in Clapham, Mr. Venn succeeded in effecting a reform, the necessity of which will seem surprising to many clergy of the present day, who are naturally accustomed to regard the use of the parish church as being entirely in their own hands. In Clapham, as in not a few towns in England, it seems to have been the custom (a legacy from Puritan times) for the rector to take only the morning service on Sundays, and for a lecturer, appointed by the parishioners, to take that in the afternoon. This was all, as there were wide and strong objections entertained against the practice of evening services. His only opportunity, therefore, of addressing the people was at a service which very few of the poor attended. It is a curious illustration of the state of Church feeling at the time that the mere proposal to open the church for service on the Sunday evening should have been thought to demand the following formal letter to the Vestry. And even this proposal, as we learn from a letter written to his friend Mr. Edwards of Lynn, had met with violent opposition in some quarters, and had been denounced at a so-called public meeting held at the Plough Inn.

¹ Rev. William Jay. A well-known Dissenting minister at Bath, where he was for many years preacher at the Argyle Chapel. Sheridan spoke of him as one of the best orators he had ever heard.

GENTLEMEN—Your attendance has been requested to-day, for the purpose of considering the propriety of my establishing a Sunday evening lecture in the parish church. It will not, I hope, be censured as pertinacious in me, if I maintain the right of the rector of the church to establish such a lecture by his own authority, since I am supported in it by the best legal information I could obtain on that subject; but the expediency of exercising that right at the present time is a different question, and it is this which I now willingly submit to your decision, being well assured that an entire harmony between a minister and his parishioners is the best foundation of that general good which it is the object of his labours to produce. I am aware that objections have frequently been made to evening lectures, and I am ready to acknowledge that some particular bad effects have sometimes taken place in consequence of them; but I still think, after mature consideration, that those effects may be prevented by prudent precautions on the part of heads of families and of the minister; and that, allowing them still to exist in some degree, they are more than overbalanced by the general good which a greater degree of religious instruction, and the formation of habits of piety, are likely to produce. The morning and afternoon services may perhaps be thought sufficient, but when it is considered how many are prevented by necessary avocations from attendance upon these, and how much among the lower classes, especially the mispending of the evening, more than balances the advantages of the day, I think the establishment of an additional evening service will not appear to be precluded. One objection which may be made in the present case would, I own, have considerable weight with me if I thought it justly founded, namely, that it may injure the income of the afternoon preacher. On this head I wish to declare in the fullest terms, that I propose it in the persuasion that it will not have this effect. The expenses attending it will be defrayed by a few persons, of whom I have every reason to expect that they will not on that account diminish their subscription to the lecturer, and I do not think that any others would, on account of their having more duty, desire to pay less. I have only further to observe, that as it is entirely voluntary on my part, I do not wish to have it considered as a necessary duty attached to the living, but that it may be dropped at the option of myself or my successors whenever it is thought expedient.

The vestry cordially accepted the proposal, and desired to thank him "for exonerating the parish from the expenses attending it" (*History of Clapham*, p. 149).

During his life at Clapham, as we have seen, the

recurrence of several long and severe attacks of illness interfered with his parish work. He was, however, fortunate in securing the successive help of several excellent curates, amongst these being Hugh Pearson, afterwards Dean of Salisbury, and J. W. Cunningham, afterwards vicar of Harrow.

Mr. Venn's evangelical opinions, though not exciting the animosity shown towards them in his father's time, and though supported by a number of his most distinguished parishioners, were of course still far from popular. As to the attitude adopted by some of those in authority, the following anecdote, told by his son Henry, is significant :—

A near relation of the Bishop of London, after being a guest at Fulham Palace, was to visit Mr. Venn at Clapham. We were ourselves sent to wait at the Bull's Head, a mere public-house, three hundred yards from the rectory of Clapham, to bring the visitor to the rectory : the truth being that the Bishop of London could not allow his carriage to be seen to draw up at Mr. Venn's rectory, though it might be seen to set down a lady at a small public-house (*Christian Observer*, January 1870).

This must refer to Dr. Randolph, who was bishop from 1809 to 1813. His predecessor, Dr. Porteous, was much more in sympathy with such opinions.

Mr. Venn was a strong supporter of the Volunteers of his day, and was for a number of years chaplain to the Clapham contingent. This company contained not a few men of note then resident in the village. Lord Teignmouth, whose father was then Lieutenant of Surrey, has described in his recollections how he “remembers Zachary Macaulay marching at the head, his austere features overshadowed by the bearskin cover of his helmet, whilst Charles and Robert Grant appeared as extemporised dragoons.” The Committee of Management requested (October 10, 1803) that Mr. Venn's “excellent and animated address to them should be printed.” On October 23 of the same year he preached a sermon to the corps, “of which 2000 copies were ordered to be printed and circulated through the parish, at the parish expense.”

As a parish clergyman he was exceedingly active, to the

fullest extent of his powers. He was, according to the account of his son John, one of the first to introduce the now familiar system of "district visiting," and also among the earliest to introduce parish schools.

It may be remarked also that it was to him that the recovery of the early parish registers of Clapham was due. Shortly before his appointment, "in consequence of their bad condition as to binding, they were heedlessly thrown by as of no value, and sold as waste paper. After much fruitless search the present worthy rector traced them by accident to a chandler's shop. . . . He has had them new bound, and has taken every precaution to prevent the recurrence of a similar misfortune" (Manning's *Surrey*, iii. 364).

His reputation and influence mainly rest on three grounds : his sermons, his establishment and promotion of the Church Missionary Society, and his personal intercourse with the remarkable group of social and religious philanthropists who happened to be gathered in and about Clapham. The first of these must naturally be regarded as of temporary importance, owing to the change of taste and opinion. Without any attempt at popularity, his sermons were decidedly good : marked by strong sense, sound argument, and great earnestness. They were highly appreciated by the group of very able men, of widely divergent character and view, who attended at his church. They were the outcome of much thought ; but, whether owing to a habit of procrastination or to some other cause, they were generally written at the last moment. His sister used, she said, to be well pleased if on his going to bed she found that he had retired with half of his morning's discourse finished on Saturday night. A selection of his sermons was published, shortly after his death, in three volumes, and had a large sale. My father used to say that he himself was partly supported at College by the proceeds of this sale, the outlay for the publication having been raised by subscription amongst friends and parishioners.

Whilst speaking of his literary efforts, it may be mentioned that he was one of the originators of, and a frequent contributor to, the *Christian Observer*. This was

started at a time when a religious magazine—which should also be literary—was almost unknown, and it was a really remarkable journal for its day. Zachary Macaulay was for some years the editor, and it was here, I believe, that his famous son's first literary productions appeared, whilst he was yet a boy. A full account of its origin, and the nature of its contents in its early days, is given in Z. Macaulay's *Life*. Owing to the taste and wide knowledge of the editor, the "Review of New Publications" and "Review of Reviews," as two of the sections were called, were particularly good. The "Literary and Philosophical Intelligence," from foreign countries as well as from home, was probably nearly if not quite unique at the time. Those who, relying on Sydney Smith's witticisms, take it for granted that an Evangelical magazine—and one concocted in Clapham—must have been a dull, narrow, and spiteful performance, should read the letter which Byron wrote to the editor on the occasion of a review of the *Giaour* (it is given in Macaulay's *Life*). He there speaks of "the pleasure which the perusal of a very able, and I believe just criticism, has afforded me," adding that this was the first time for years that he had thought it worth taking notice of any public criticism.

The *Observer* had a long life for such a magazine, considering how tastes vary in such matters, and how much enterprise was subsequently devoted to journals of a more popularly attractive character. I may add that it was owing to a strong feeling of filial devotion that my father spent much labour, towards the close of his life, in the attempt to keep the journal in existence. He not only wrote in it himself, in spite of growing infirmity and overwhelming press of work, but also for several years undertook the editorship. As a separate publication it did not long survive his death.

As to John Venn's contributions to the journal, he has, with his usual methodical care, left a list. These are naturally for the most part of a religious character, but he seems also to have done a good deal of miscellaneous and scientific reviewing. Amongst his articles are the following: "Review of the *Philosophical Transactions* for 1801";

“On the Dry Rot in Buildings” ; “Anecdotes of Mr. Walker of Truro” (an early Evangelical) ; “Review of Bates’ *Rural Philosophy*” ; “Review of Milner’s *Church History*” ; “Remarks on the Account of the Death of Dr. Priestley,” etc.

The direction in which Mr. Venn’s influence is still most perceptible at the present day is certainly in the principles and practice of the Church Missionary Society, of which he must be considered the main originator. A full account of his work here will be found in Mr. E. Stock’s history of that Society (1898). The following paragraphs have been extracted, with very trifling verbal alterations, from that history :—

February 18, 1799, the Eclectic Society¹ held a general conversation on the subject of a mission connected with the Evangelical part of the Church of England. This resulted in a notice for a more regular discussion on March 18, when John Venn himself would introduce the subject in the following form, “What methods can we use more effectually to promote the knowledge of the Gospel among the heathen?” John Venn’s wisdom and judgment are very manifest in the summaries of his address which have been preserved. Ultimately, after others had spoken, it was resolved to form a society immediately. On April 1 another meeting was held to prepare the rules, and on Friday, April 12, 1799, the public meeting took place which established the Church Missionary Society. Mr. Venn occupied the chair on this occasion, and afterwards drew up a paper entitled “An Account of a Society for Missions to Africa and the East.” As was stated at the Jubilee of the Society in 1848, Mr. Venn “laid down on that memorable occasion those principles and regulations which have formed the basis of the Society, and upon which its work has been carried on ever since.”

Mr. Venn continued to take an active part in the work of the new society during the remainder of his life. He preached the annual sermon in 1805, and on the occasion of the second valedictory meeting—*i.e.* the meeting to take leave of those going out as missionaries—he gave the address ; “it might be delivered now, almost word for word, to any departing missionary band.”

His first wife died, as has been said, in 1803 ; and for

¹ A clerical society, supported by John Venn and those who were in general agreement with him.

the next nine years his sister Jane lived with him at the rectory, and undertook the charge of the family. It was no light task, for there were seven children, of whom the youngest was only a year old ; and her brother's frequent illness, and consequent absence at Bath and elsewhere, threw a heavy burden of responsibility upon her. She lived to a very great age (p. 109), being in her turn devotedly watched over by her nephew and niece at Hereford till the close of her life.

About a year before his death my grandfather married his second wife,¹ Frances Turton. They were married at St. George's, Bloomsbury, August 25, 1812. Mrs. Venn survived her husband for many years, dying January 12, 1870. Her mind had failed long before her death.

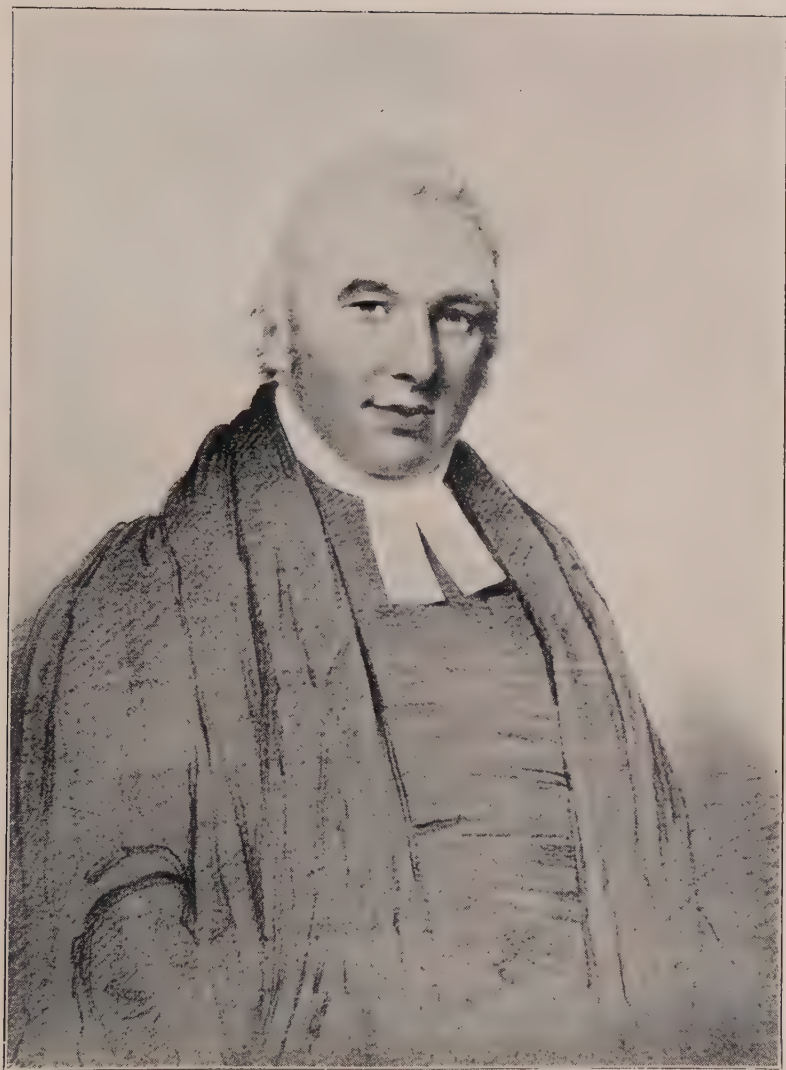
During his last few years his health was very weak. He seems to have suffered from dropsy and jaundice, aggravated by some internal injury originated by a fall from his horse. He died at Clapham, July 1, 1813, and was buried² in the ground of the old church.

We have two likenesses of him, one (already mentioned) by J. Downman taken at the age of twenty-three, when he was about to leave College ; and one inscribed "Slater, London, 1814." Either the date is mistaken, or it must be a copy of some original, as this was the year after his death. It represents him at about the age of fifty.

It is a striking illustration of the constitutional difference, mental and bodily, between John Venn and his father, that whereas the latter seemed actually held back from death at the last from sheer joy at meeting it, the feelings of the former found vent in the following

¹ Frances, fifth daughter of John Turton, of Sugnal, near Eccleshall, Staffordshire, by Mary, daughter of Rev. Thomas Meysey, rector of Perton, Worcestershire. A pedigree of the family (Turton of Alrewas) for six or eight generations is given in Stebbing Shaw's *History of Staffordshire*. John Turton retired in late life to Clapham, where he made Mr. Venn's acquaintance. He was great-grandson of Sir John Turton, Baron of the Exchequer, who was buried at Alrewas in 1707. The family pedigree and arms are entered in the Herald's Visitation of Staffordshire of 1663-4.

² As already stated, the N. aisle of the old church had been left standing, and was used as a mortuary chapel. The grave in which John Venn, his father, and his wife, were buried, stood near the S.E. corner of this chapel. It was, according to the account in the *Gentleman's Magazine* (vol. 85, p. ii.) an altar tomb, and contained inscriptions to the father and wife, the inscription to John Venn being placed in the new church. The tomb seems, on the same authority, to have occupied the site of the communion table of the church (St. Paul's), built in 1815. I can find no trace of it now.



P. 138.

JOHN VENN, M.A.

From Sketch by J. W. Slater, about 1812.

expressions—they are contained in the fragment of a letter to his life-long friend, Samuel Thornton :—

My dear Friend.—When you receive this I shall have gone to give in the account of my stewardship before that awful Tribunal at which I am too sensible of my numerous defects to expect any mercy but through the infinite clemency of the Judge and the gracious intercession of our blessed Redeemer.

There is a long inscription¹ to his memory in Clapham church. If it seems somewhat fulsome in tone, it must be remembered that he had himself expressly requested “that nothing should be recorded of him in the way of panegyric.”

With his customary desire for accurate record, my grandfather drew up a list of every publication of his which he could recollect, adding with his characteristic modesty, “They are none of them of importance or deserve to be remembered ; but they were written with an honest intention and published at the request of others, and when read with the partial regard of an affectionate child may do some good.” They are as follows :—

The Nature of the Gospel as stated in the Writings of St. Paul. A sermon preached at the Visitation of the Archdeacon of Norwich held at Litcham, May 10, 1786.

Reflections on this Season of Danger. A sermon preached at Clapham, April 15, 1798.

Select portions of Psalms extracted from various versions and adapted to Public Worship ; with an Appendix containing Hymns for the principal Festivals of the Church of England. For the use of Clapham Church. 1800.

The Easy Spelling Book, Part I ; containing words of one syllable. 1797.

The Ground of Encouragement in the present National Danger. A sermon preached at Clapham, October 23, 1803.

A sermon preached at St. Andrew by the Wardrobe

¹ The stone stands against the wall, at the E. end of the N. aisle (1902).

and St. Anne, Blackfriars, June 4, 1805 ; before the Society for Missions to Africa and the East, instituted by members of the Established Church.

Published in *Cheap Repository Tracts* :—Daniel in the Den of Lions. Character of Onesimus. Reflections on Harvest.

The account prefixed to the "First Report of the Society of Missions to Africa and the East" explaining the Society's views and objects.

The Report of the Society for bettering the condition of the Poor in Clapham.

The Necessity of the Observance of the Sabbath. A pamphlet circulated through the parish in 1805.

Mr. Venn's first wife, Katharine, was the only daughter of William King, a merchant at Hull (see Appendix, for more about the family). She was born there, January 1, 1760. We have a pleasing picture of her in oil, as a little child. A number of her letters are preserved, which show her to have been a very lively, intelligent girl, and better instructed than most of her contemporaries. Like her brother George, she was very fond of music. She was evidently sought after, and had several offers of marriage,—Mr. Carus Wilson, afterwards a well-known Evangelical preacher, being apparently amongst her suitors. The only tradition about her which has survived is that—very appropriately as a Yorkshire woman—she was an excellent rider, and very fond of horses. There is an amusing account in one of her letters of a day's stag-hunting in Epping Forest when she was staying with relations in that neighbourhood :—

I must not forget to tell you that my favourite diversion is stag-hunting, and about a fortnight ago we had a most charming day, for we were so well up in the chace that we could have been at the death. . . . We were not at the rousing of the stag. The first sound we heard was *Bon Slote*, but we soon heard the agreeable cry of *Tio Tio*, and a most beautiful view we had. You know, I suppose, that this is the finest chace. I believe it is called the Royal Chace. We had all the gentlemen in the neighbourhood.

. . . It was fortunate for the ladies that the stag did not take soil, but I own I should have liked to have seen him at bay.—(Letter to her brother, October 20, 1783.)

Her short married life of fourteen years was too much occupied by family duties and cares for the survival of any but purely domestic reminiscences. She brought her husband a considerable accession of friends, the many visits to and from whom show that his and her society were sought after and appreciated. She died after a brief illness, at Clapham, April 15, 1803.

Her younger brother George was entered at Trinity College in 1779. He obtained a Scholarship there, and won the Declamation prize during his studentship; and graduated as eleventh wrangler in 1784. He was a Fellow of Trinity from 1785 to 1810, and afterwards Canon of Ely. He had been at the Hull Grammar School under Joseph Milner, and seems to have made some acquaintance with his future brother-in-law. He was all his life passionately fond of music, and was an excellent performer himself. He was for some years tutor to the young Duke of Rutland,¹ who entered College in 1793, and with whom he retained a friendship for the rest of his life. He was of decidedly Evangelical opinions, though his studious and retiring disposition prevented him from taking any prominent part as a preacher or speaker. On one occasion at least his conscientious adherence to his convictions stood in the way of his advancement. He was definitely offered the Mastership of Jesus College—then in the gift of the Bishop of Ely—if he would undertake to resign his connection with the Bible Society. (The bishop's letter is quite explicit on the point.) This he entirely declined to do. He was for many years rector of Whitwell, Rutlandshire, a living in the gift of the Duke of Rutland. He died at Drypool, Hull, when on a visit to my father, February 5, 1831.

We have many of his letters preserved, as he and his sister always kept up an affectionate intercourse. The

¹ He travelled much with him in the British Isles for several years, the Continent being then, of course, mostly closed to Englishmen. The journals of these tours were published in several volumes; nominally written by the youthful Duke, but presumably the composition was largely due to the tutor.

correspondence commences when he was a student at Cambridge, and is interesting as showing the manners and habits of the University at that day. The following brief extract gives an account of a day's life of a reading man, at a time when the indolence and deadness of the eighteenth century were beginning to pass away :—

I generally get up every morning to Chapel : after prayers I walk into the fields for about a quarter of an hour to imbibe the wholesomeness of the morning air. I always contrive to finish breakfast by 8½. I then sit down for an hour and a half to a Greek historian I have in hand at present, viz., Thucydides. I then pursue my mathematical or rather philosophical studies till 11½, at which time we go to lectures to Mr. Therond, and continue there till near dinner. In the afternoon I attend the disputations (*i.e.* in the Public Schools) till 3½ ; from that time till 5 I am employed in reading a Latin author : what I am now reading in that line is the most inimitable and enchanting Poem from which you would find great entertainment by reading it in the translation by Dryden, which you will find in the Book Case. From 5 to 6 I get my tea and practise on the harpsichord. I then read Rollin's *Belles Lettres* till chapel time ; and after supper, provided I have no engagement with Mr. Collier, I resume my philosophical investigations till bed-time.—(Trin. Coll., November 27, 1781.)

Mr. and Mrs. Venn had eight children, as follow :—

1. Henry ; born at Dunham, November 24, 1790 ; died December 18, 1790.

2. Catherine Eling ; born at Dunham, December 2, 1791 ; died, unmarried, at 14 Mabledon Place, London, April 22, 1827. Delicate health prevented her from leading as active and varied a life as most of her family. She was a very fair artist : our sketches of Dunham and Yelling churches are by her.

3. Jane Catherine ; born at Clapham, May 16, 1793. She married, at Harrow, December 22, 1814, James Stephen, junior, afterwards the Right Hon. Sir James Stephen, K.C.B., long and well known as permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, and latterly Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge. By him she had, amongst other children, the late Mr. Justice Stephen and Sir Leslie Stephen. She died February 27, 1875.

4. Emelia, born at Clapham, June 20, 1794. For

more than fifty years the companion and active helper of her brother John in all his parochial and charitable undertakings. Those who knew her in her later years will remember her as an unusually lively and active old lady, as full of interest in the present as in the past, and showing the keenest sympathy with the personal affairs of every one connected with her. To the end of her long life she continued to add to her friends and acquaintances: I remember her saying, when she was about eighty-two, that there were forty houses of friends within reach, at which she was accustomed to call. "My dear," she said, "if I did not make new friends, a walk on Aylestone Hill would be like going through a Campo Santo."

To the last she was passionately fond of travelling, especially in Italy. Some of my earliest recollections are of her numerous collection of engravings, and afterwards of photographs, of the buildings and pictures at Rome and elsewhere. The first of these journeys abroad¹ was taken with her relations, the Diceys, in 1815. They visited Waterloo, about six weeks after the battle; passed Strassburg, which had not surrendered and was still under bombardment by the allies; spent a month in Switzerland; and two weeks in Paris, whilst the British troops were in occupation, and many of the pictures and statues which the French had swept up from every great gallery in Europe were still at the Louvre.

Till she settled with her brother at Pinner, in 1830, her life was remarkably full of incident and variety. Being one of several at home, she had plenty of leisure. Her journals suggest an almost constant round of visits—often for weeks or months at a time—to the many friends whom she inherited from the Clapham days: the Barings at Stratton, the Thorntons and Grants at Battersea Rise, Wilberforces, Pearsons, Macaulays, and others² too

¹ She kept a daily journal throughout most of her life; but as it was entirely in shorthand, rather carelessly written, no one is likely to be the better for it. That of the above tour, which is minute and extremely lively, I have taken the trouble to copy out into longhand.

² About 1874, when on a visit to Cambridge, she went with us to call on the President of Queens' College, and rather startled some of the company by her reminiscences of the Lodge in the days of Isaac Milner—who had then been dead fifty-four years.

numerous to mention ; besides family meetings with the Diceys at Claybrook, the Battens at Harrow, the Stephens, and her uncle King at Ely.

To us, in our childhood, she was like a second mother. When occasion demanded a new governess, she would come up to London and take endless pains in her endeavours to select the best. In the choice of books she showed a wonderful capacity in discovering such as children *would* read, and not merely such as it was considered by the elders that they ought to read. And the house at Hereford was always open to us as a second home.

5. Henry Venn ; born at Clapham, February 10, 1796 (see on).

6. Caroline ; born at Clapham, August 22, 1798. She married at St. Pancras, December 12, 1820, the Rev. Samuel Ellis Batten, assistant-master at Harrow. She was his second wife. He died somewhat suddenly, May 3, 1830, leaving her with two young daughters. For several years after Mr. Batten's death she lived much abroad, principally in Italy.

One daughter, Emelia, reached womanhood. She married, 1852, Russell Gurney, Recorder of London, and M.P. for Southampton. She became well and widely known for her great liberality and for her keen interest in, and knowledge of, art. The most permanent memorial of this interest is the elaborately decorated "Chapel of the Ascension" in the Bayswater Road,¹ the details of which she minutely discussed with the artist, Mr. Frederic Shields. She was also a devoted student of Dante, and published a Commentary under the title *Dante's Pilgrim's Progress*. She died October 17, 1896.

7. Maria ; born at Clapham, June 23, 1800 ; died there, September 13, 1809.

8. John ; born at Clapham, April 17, 1802 (see on).

A few words must be said here about the so-called Clapham Sect. Several descriptions have been given of the remarkable group of men commonly included under that

¹ There is an account of this chapel in the *Art Journal* for November 1902. A full *Descriptive Handbook* was published by Mr. Shields in 1897.

term ; two of which, in particular, stand out in a way which might well make any other biographer shrink from seeming to court comparison. In his *Essays on Ecclesiastical Biography*, the late Sir James Stephen—drawing from the stores of his own early recollections—has described, with rare delicacy of touch and tenderness of sympathy, the strong and the weak points of the men amongst whom he had been brought up. Sir George Trevelyan again, in the life of his uncle, Lord Macaulay, has sketched with hereditary brilliancy, the main characteristics of some of those with whom Zachary Macaulay lived and worked.

To speak of this group as a “sect,” if by this term a religious sect is to be understood, is rather misleading. No doubt they accepted in the main the body of doctrines known as Evangelical. That was indeed almost the only form in which strong religious feeling then expressed itself. “To John Venn the whole sect looked up as their pastor and spiritual guide.” But the real bond of union amongst them, that which continually brought them into mutual co-operation, was rather to be sought in their deeds of active charity than in their speculative opinions. Several, indeed, of the busy men of affairs who composed the group sat rather loose to dogma, and one at least of their intimate associates—William Smith—was an avowed Socinian.

The most permanent element in the Clapham community must be sought in the Thornton family. John Thornton, a merchant renowned for his more than princely munificence, “one of those rare men in whom the desire to relieve distress assumes the form of a master passion,” was already there, as we have seen, in 1756, when Henry Venn began his ministry at Clapham. He died in 1790. John Venn arrived as rector in 1792, and continued the friendship with his contemporaries of the next generation, Samuel, Robert, and Henry. These were all men of some mark, being respectively members of Parliament for Surrey, Colchester, and Southwark. The latter in particular must be regarded as the central figure of the sect. He continued in his father’s steps, prominent in all good works, and his house on the Common was the chosen meeting-place for the discussion of all the many

religious and social schemes with the furtherance of which Clapham became associated. If, in the temper of the worshipper at holy places, one seeks to have the precise locality pointed out whence the spirit of the place started on its mission through the world, the pilgrim's feet may be directed to the library in Henry Thornton's house. The rectory study may have been the birthplace of the Church Missionary Society, but this was the spot where most of the world-embracing schemes were discussed and planned. The house still stands, almost unaltered, and the oval library—planned by no less a man than William Pitt himself—is there to this day. There used to gather “a knot of legislators rehearsing some approaching debate ; or travellers from distant lands ; or circumnavigators of the worlds of literature and science ; or the pastor of the neighbouring church, whose look announced him as the channel through which benedictions passed to earth from heaven.” “Politics in that microcosm were rather cosmopolitan than national. Every human interest had its guardian, every region of the globe its representative.”

The other principal members of the party, as described by Stephen, are the following. Far the most prominent, in fact the only one who was widely known in the country, was Wilberforce, “the Agamemnon of the host we celebrate, the very sun of the Claphamic system.” He lived for many years next door to Henry Thornton. With him was closely connected Thomas Gisborne, of Yoxall Lodge, Staffordshire, who resided a large part of each year with Wilberforce. “Among the sectaries of the village he took his share in labour and in deliberation, whether the abolition of the slave-trade, the diffusion of Christianity, the war against vice and ignorance, or the advancement of Evangelical theology was the object of the passing day.” Granville Sharpe, to whose indefatigable exertions was due the ever-memorable judicial decision which first pronounced the nullity of slavery on British soil. With him, in the same great cause, laboured Zachary Macaulay, Thomas Clarkson, and William Smith ; all but Clarkson inhabitants of Clapham. Macaulay is best known to the present and passing generation through the fame of his

illustrious son. James Stephen, Master in Chancery, the earnest coadjutor of the preceding, was not only himself a resident in Clapham, but had a twofold connection with other residents, as the brother-in-law of Wilberforce, and as father of Sir James Stephen, who married a daughter of John Venn. To these should be added Charles Grant, Director of the East India Company, and John Shore, Lord Teignmouth, Governor-General of India. The establishment of the Bible Society was mainly the work of the last.

HENRY VENN,¹ OF C.M.S.

HENRY VENN, second son of John Venn, was born at Clapham, February 10, 1796: his elder brother, of the same name, was born at Dunham, and died in infancy. Coming in the midst of a singularly bright, happy, and united family, his early recollections seem to have been almost uniformly joyous. He lost his mother in 1803, when he was a little more than seven years old. Her place was supplied, as far as this was possible, by his aunt Jane. Something has been already said about the latter, so it need only be repeated that she was a woman of rare sagacity and judgment, and by her early training at Huddersfield and Yelling belonged to a type of cultivated domestic house-managers now almost or entirely extinct. She lived in her brother's rectory from 1803 until his second marriage in 1811. Her influence in the family was naturally increased by her brother's long illnesses and frequent absence from home.

The following brief autobiographical sketch by Henry Venn was drawn up at Torquay, after the death of his wife, and when he had himself only partially recovered from a dangerous illness:—

In the year 1805, Samuel Thornton,² a year younger than myself, came to be my father's pupil and to be educated with me. Then, I suppose, plans of instruction were adopted, such as my father's wisdom was well calculated to devise; but he was over-

¹ The life of Henry Venn was published in 1881, written mainly by his former colleague at the Church Missionary House, Rev. W. Knight. That volume is in great part, naturally, a history of the Society which absorbed so much of his zeal and energy throughout life. Following the plan of these biographical sketches, personal characteristics and events will here be mainly dealt with.

² Afterwards Admiral Thornton. Son of Samuel, the well-known banker of Clapham, and Albury Park, Surrey; M.P. for the county. Father of Mr. P. M. Thornton, M.P. for the Clapham division of Surrey.



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HENRY VENN, M.A.

From Drawing by G. Richmond, about 1831.

whelmed with the business of his important ministerial charge, and could only hear our lessons in the morning from eight to nine. The rest of the time we learnt our lessons alone in a schoolroom which opened out on a playground, and two windows looked into the street. I have a more lively recollection of transactions at the door and window than at the table. . . . I cannot but in some measure deplore the idle and desultory habits of reading which I thus acquired. That habit of strenuous application and exact attention which boys get at a good school, and under the excitement of emulation, I never had, and when I went to College I grievously felt the want of it, and was forcibly discouraged by that feeling, far beyond the reality of the case. Samuel Thornton remained with us until he went to sea in 1812. My other dear and constant companion was Charles Shore¹ (the first Lord Teignmouth's eldest son), and George Stainforth² during his holidays. My recollections of these years are all of unmixed happiness. My father was always pleased with me, and most tender to me; but his constant occupations and ill-health removed him in some degree from that familiar companionship which would otherwise, I am persuaded, have been his delight. Hence, perhaps, with the most romantic love for him, I had always a degree of awe in his presence. When Samuel Thornton went for his holidays to his father's beautiful seat, Albury Park, I generally went with him, and was treated like a son in every respect. . . . I met with universal kindness and attention from all my father's friends, and thus I was brought much more forward in life, as it is called, than boys usually are, and prepared, by premature experience of the kindness and confidence of friends, for that difficult situation to which I was called at my father's death, at the age of seventeen, to settle his affairs, and make various family arrangements. . . . In 1812 the two sons of Sir Thomas Baring,³ Thomas and John, came to be my father's pupils; they were much younger than myself, and I was in some measure to instruct them. . . . My father gave me the wisest instructions about my studies, set me a high standard of accuracy, excited a desire to excel in composition and style of writing, and to enter into the spirit of an author; he encouraged me also to seek the acquisition of *all* kinds of knowledge—mechanical knowledge, astronomy, electricity, gardening, and heraldry.

¹ Charles John Shore, afterwards second Lord Teignmouth. Died 1885. His father, John Shore, was for many years in the East India Company's service; Governor-General, 1792; created Baron Teignmouth, 1798. He resided at Clapham 1802-8, where he was intimately associated with the religious and philanthropic life of the place. He was one of the founders and first president of the Bible Society.

² George Stainforth, my father's most intimate contemporary friend. A very promising scholar; second medallist, 1818 (Connop Thirlwall being first). Died August 1820.

³ Afterwards the first Lord Northbrook, father of the present Earl Northbrook.

The estimation in which Evangelical opinions were generally held in those days must have prevented any real intimacy on the part of the rector's family with persons outside the so-called "Clapham Sect." But there were corresponding advantages, for within that circle there were to be found men whom, for their ability, knowledge, and experience of affairs, it would be hard to surpass elsewhere. And these men lived in the closest intimacy and friendship. In the following generation this vigour of character naturally showed very various developments, and led to widely different careers; but it could have been no ordinary circumstances which served to train such men as T. B. Macaulay, James Stephen, the Wilberforces, the Grants, and others, besides the Venns. Differing widely, as they did, in their capacities and careers, they were alike in their indefatigable diligence and conscientiousness. Those who knew the others would probably say of them, what those who were most intimate with Henry Venn would certainly say of him, that this conscientiousness resulted in what may almost be called an acquired incapacity for anything in the shape of loose and slipshod work.

The early life of all the children of John Venn was spent in the old rectory house, of which an illustration is here given.¹ The life in that home was not only a happy, but a busy and cultivated one. The girls were, up to a certain point, taught Latin as carefully as their brothers. Foreign languages were not neglected, though in those days the prospect of being able to put them to use in foreign travel was but small. Other accomplishments were added, amongst these the art of writing shorthand² which some of the daughters acquired with almost professional success, and which they continued to use throughout their lives.

¹ The old rectory was pulled down some years ago, and its site is now occupied by rows of small houses. One memorial of the past is preserved in the name "Venn Street."

² Their father (*v. p.* 116) had been rather fascinated by the subject of shorthand from an early age. For the two following generations the ladies of the family habitually used it in their diaries, and their letters to each other. The system adopted was that of Gurney; popular in its day, but now so far superseded that the mass of correspondence preserved will soon become undecipherable.



CLAPHAM RECTORY, ABOUT 1812.
From Water-colour Sketch.



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CLAPHAM COMMON, 1825.
From Contemporary Print.

The actual Common has not been materially curtailed since those days, though it has been considerably tamed down by its gradual inclusion in greater London, and the consequent regulations and treatment of County Councils. Henry Venn's old friend, Lord Teignmouth, gave us a reminiscence which indicates the change between then and now. "I remember visiting your father, some time after we had ceased to reside in Clapham in 1808, when we ranged the neighbouring commons with his gun, the only instance in which he occurs to me in the character of a sportsman." The accompanying illustrations show the general appearance of the place 100 to 150 years ago. The church has been left practically unaltered, and remains as solid and ugly as when it was built in 1776, except that within the last few weeks (June 1902) a chancel has been appended to the end of it. A few of the houses still stand almost unaltered, with their stately old-fashioned gardens, amongst these being that which Henry Skyes Thornton the banker occupied until his death. But most of them have long since been converted to other uses, or pulled down to make place for modern villas. As Sir G. O. Trevelyan says, in his *Life of Macaulay*, "What was once the house of Zachary Macaulay stands almost within swing of the bells of a stately and elegant Roman Catholic chapel; and the pleasant mansion of Lord Teignmouth, the cradle of the Bible Society, is now turned into a convent of monks."

In March 1813 Henry Venn was sent with Charles Baring to Cambridge, to read with the well-known Professor Farish,¹ for a year or so before entering College. One object of this was, I believe, to escape the ballot for the Militia,—naturally rather strict at this time,—resident students being presumably exempt.

The professor only undertook to superintend our mathematical studies, which he did by displaying before us the extraordinary

¹ Farish was a contemporary of John Venn and an intimate friend. He was also a family connection, as he had married Hannah, sister of James Stephen senior (father of James junior, Henry Venn's brother-in-law). He was senior wrangler in 1778; Professor of Chemistry, 1794-1813; and Jacksonian Professor of Natural Philosophy, 1813-37. A very ingenious mechanician and mathematician, whose extreme absence of mind sometimes led to remarkable results.

power of lucid explanation which he possessed on such subjects, but seldom examining the progress we made. His kindness to us, however, was parental, and very great advantage I am sensible we both derived from his clear and comprehensive grasp of mind on all subjects within the range of his thought. My cousin, H. V. Elliott,¹ kindly undertook to superintend my classical studies, for which purpose never was a person better qualified in every respect. But I had been too near a companion to him to make this plan answer. Nevertheless I derived much more from his instructions than I had ever acquired before.

In June 1813 he was called back to Clapham in consequence of the dangerous illness of his father, who died a few weeks after his arrival. This was one of the earliest occasions on which that remarkable maturity of character and soundness of judgment which distinguished him through life were put to the test. His father had fully appreciated his character in this respect, as, though he was then but a few months over seventeen, he left him one of his executors, expressly saying that "his prudence and discretion will amply make up for his want of years and experience." Never was judgment better justified, for, though he was, of course, constantly aided by the advice of his father's Clapham friends, the bulk of the work fell upon him, including the preparation of his father's sermons for publication. From the first also, in concert with his aunt Jane, who now returned to the superintendence of the family, he had much of the management of the domestic affairs, including such matters as the arrangements for the education of his brothers and sisters. "Ah, he was indeed a father to us before he was to you," as his brother John remarked to us at the time of his death.

Added to the time which was required for one, a novice in accounts, to settle many long and intricate ones, I had at the same time to manage many of the affairs of the living, and to provide Mr. Dealtry² with that information which is required by one perfectly new to everything of the kind, he having never before

¹ Henry Venn Elliott; second medallist 1814; Fellow of Trinity for some years. Afterwards a popular and well-known preacher at Brighton.

² William Dealtry (1775-1847) succeeded John Venn as rector of Clapham. He was a Fellow of Trinity; second wrangler in 1796; author of a work on Fluxions (*i.e.* Differential Calculus). Afterwards Prebendary of Winchester, and Chancellor of the diocese, and Archdeacon of Surrey.

even had a curacy. A great portion of my time and thoughts has also been occupied in placing in a proper train the sermons designed for publication. Though four persons had kindly engaged to do all in their power, I was yet obliged on many accounts to do much myself. I hope I have now settled that matter.—(Letter to H. V. Elliott, August 1813.)

He returned to Professor Farish, remained with him for about a year, entering at Queens' in October 1814. This College was then in a very flourishing state, so far as numbers were concerned, standing fourth in the University. The president was the well-known Isaac Milner, of whom my uncle has given some reminiscences further on; and of whose capacity and dominant character Sir James Stephen has given a vivid description in his Ecclesiastical Essays. It was probably his reputation that decided the choice of this College. But the bulk of the Fellows in residence seem to have been of a very rough and uncultivated character.¹ I never heard my father, with all his charity and his keen appreciation of humorous character, refer to any one of them as either willing or able to sympathise with the students or influence them for good.

Of his College life we have few details. He was naturally of a shy and sensitive nature, and rather shut off from most of his companions by his strong religious convictions. Things had much changed since his father's day. John Venn's old contemporary and friend, Simeon, had now become a power in Cambridge and in England, and the religiously inclined students, instead of being scattered in isolation, were, under his influence, brought into frequent intercourse with each other. They became regular attendants at Simeon's church, Holy Trinity, and at his Friday evening gatherings in his College rooms. A "Sim" was the recognised term for those who thus distinguished themselves, and, as the Evangelical views

¹ In a squib of the day it is declared that, on one occasion, "fired with frenzy, they all fell to blows." This was not mere exaggeration, for Mr. Venn, in a letter addressed to the Master, speaks of a personal combat of this kind, in the presence of students and strangers, as being a notorious fact. It may be remarked that the hero of the anecdote recorded by Mr. Conybeare in a once well-known article (on Church Parties), viz., the vicar who remarked, on hearing that his church had been filled to crowding during his absence by a popular young substitute, "that it didn't matter, he would soon empty it again," was then a resident Fellow of the College.

were almost the only form of religious life at Cambridge, the name came to be applied to most of those who were of a serious way of thinking.

There were, however, disadvantages in this state of things, as it tended to split the society of the place into hostile camps. Comparing Henry Venn's College experiences with those of his father and grandfather, I cannot but think that a man with naturally considerable social gifts lost a good deal by being confined to the society of a few, and those few of one way of thinking.

He was, of course, a steady reader, and those were days before men had begun to throw their strength almost entirely into one line of study. Though not an accurate scholar in the University sense, he was very fairly acquainted with the classical languages. With the Greek Testament he kept himself familiar till the end of his life. Like his grandfather—I can speak from experience—he had learned the languages soundly enough in his youth to be able, many years afterwards, to help his sons in their schoolboy tasks. He gained a College prize for a Latin declamation, and two prizes in mathematics, and was elected a Scholar early in his career.

As to his amusements there is little to be said, for such resources were very scarce at that time, and he had neither his grandfather's love of cricket nor his father's passion for boating. Long walks with some friend were then, and long afterwards, the staple form of exercise for the ordinary quiet student ; and these walks¹ had always to be performed in cap and gown. The only other relaxation I ever heard him allude to—and this was far too expensive to be more than a rare indulgence—consisted in occasional long rides. There was still, at that time, a vast amount of open country all round Cambridge, which made excursions on horseback very attractive. One occasional trip was to go to Newmarket Heath, thence to Ely, dine with his uncle Canon King, and so home again ; most of this route being then unenclosed.

¹ My first visit to Cambridge was in 1845, when my father drove us children down from London on a visit to the President of Queens', his old friend Joshua King. I remember, as we approached Cambridge, his telling us that if it had been earlier in the day we should have met numbers of men out walking in their caps and gowns.

The May term of 1815 saw the last occurrence in Cambridge of an experience common enough in mediæval times. The plague of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the small-pox of the eighteenth, were epidemics of the past. But there were occasional outbreaks of typhoid, and in this year the prevalence of this disease was so serious that the students were dismissed, and allowed to count the term in their absence. Henry Venn went with his sisters to Cromer, where he was afterwards joined by his friend G. Stainforth.

His last long vacation was spent with a reading party at Tenby—a remote spot from Cambridge then—under Mr. Ebdon¹ of Caius. The end of the time he and his friend Stainforth filled up at Manorbier, a village on the coast near by.

He graduated B.A. in 1818, being nineteenth amongst the wranglers. The smaller Colleges had not then adopted the plan of electing Fellows solely from their place in the mathematical list. A fair knowledge of classics was demanded; in fact the examination was almost confined to this subject; and Mr. Venn accordingly spent his next year in careful preparation for this purpose.

The summer of 1818 was a time to which he always afterwards looked back with affectionate remembrance. It was mostly spent at Rydal in Westmoreland, with the Wilberforce family. William Wilberforce had been a close friend of his father, and the friendship was handed on undiminished, as the following extract from a letter of this date will show:—

My dear Henry—for I hate the formality of any other way of accosting you . . . yours ever affectionately, and with the deepest sense of your kindness, for which may God reward you: begging also your prayers for the success of our endeavours, I remain ever yours sincerely and affectionately.

Remarkable terms for the old statesman to use to a youth of twenty-two. Wilberforce's friendship introduced Mr. Venn to several of the then local celebrities whose acquaintance he would not otherwise have made; amongst

¹ J. C. Ebdon, B.A. 1816. For some time Fellow and Tutor of Trinity Hall; afterwards Head-Master of Ipswich School.

these, Wordsworth and Southey, with the latter of whom he had a long day's ramble through St. John's Vale.

In January 1819 he was elected Fellow of Queens', and on the 31st October following was ordained deacon by the Bishop of Ely. Owing to his name and opinions he had at first some difficulty in finding any one to accept him as curate. In a letter to a friend he speaks of having only three alternatives before him: a foreign chaplaincy, a country curacy near Croydon, and that of St. Dunstan's, Fleet Street. This latter he accepted in 1821, being ordained priest by the Bishop of Norwich on June 17 of that year. The post was a very laborious one, for Mr. Lloyd, the rector, was in weak health and generally absent at another living. The parish was then much more populous than it is now—6000, as against 1800—and contained many very bad districts, not a few of which have been since improved away. The tradesmen in Fleet Street then, with scarcely an exception, lived over their shops.

Mr. R. B. Seeley the publisher, who was then resident in the parish, has given (1873) the following reminiscences:—

At a distance of fifty years it will not be expected that I should recollect much of the sermons which I heard at St. Dunstan's in 1822, 1823. Yet some of them made an impression which will never be effaced. I heard from Mr. Venn an exposition of the Lord's Prayer so full and so clear that nothing I have since listened to from more celebrated pulpit orators has obliterated it from my memory. . . . Few people would have been able to anticipate the position which he occupied half a century later. The quietness of his demeanour, the absence of everything pretentious or aspiring, and his freedom from that sort of perhaps allowable ambition which is so common nowadays, all tended to prevent the thought from arising that in the curate of St. Dunstan's men beheld one who half a century after would possess a degree and extent of influence in the Church which no other man, apart from rank and official dignity, could pretend to wield.

As a preacher he could not, in the common sense of the term, be called popular. He always devoted much care and thought to his sermons; but he had not a very easy delivery. No one could state his views in a more clear and enlivening manner in the committee-room, and

he had a singularly happy conversational tact, set off with an abundance of anecdotes ; but, as he was well aware himself, he had none of those natural or acquired characteristics which are required for good public speaking. At the annual meetings in Exeter Hall his task was to write the report, his brother's to read it. He made efforts, though somewhat late, to remedy the defect, and would often impress upon young clergymen the importance of adding to the weight of their matter by every legitimate improvement in their manner.

It was perhaps to improve himself in the art of speaking that he was for some time a member of a small debating society. This was at the instigation of his friend Charles Shore, afterwards Lord Teignmouth, who supplies the following reminiscence :—

We met weekly at the house of Dr. King, afterwards during many years a much respected resident at Brighton. The members were, as far as I can recollect : Sir R. T. Kindersley (Vice-Chancellor), Sir C. Chambers, George Grote (the historian), Francis Baring (Lord Northbrook), Norman, Lord Overstone, H. Handley (M.P.), G. R. Smith (M.P.), Maberley (Sec. to the Post Office), Stephen Lushington, Cowell, Cameron, King, Venn, and myself. Dr. King, our president, used to boast that every member of the club distinguished himself in after life.

I never heard my father allude to this club, and suspect that his natural shyness at that time prevented him from taking any very active part in its proceedings.

He had four years of very hard work at his London curacy, broken only by two short holidays, one in the north and one in the west. These were both undertaken for the purpose of completing some of his father's family inquiries. His expedition to Devonshire was made in 1823, and that to Huddersfield in 1824. He has given an account of each in his Journals, from which I have already quoted. Whilst at work at St. Dunstan's he lived with the rest of his family at 14 Mabledon Place,¹ near the present St. Pancras Station. The party then consisted

¹ After their father's death they took a house at Harrow in June 1814, John being sent to the school. Here Jane married James Stephen (December 22, 1814). They moved to London about 1817, soon after which John went to Charterhouse. He used to relate how, when he visited them from Harrow, he cut across the fields, steering by the scaffolding of St. Pancras church, which was then being built.

of himself, his aunt Jane Venn, his sisters Emelia, Caroline, and Catherine, and, till 1820, his brother John. Caroline was married here in 1820, and Catherine died in 1827. They stayed here till 1829.

He left London in 1824, and took up his residence in College. His principal reason for the change is given in a letter to his rector, Mr. Lloyd :—

I have long determined that before I undertake another ministerial charge I would devote some time to regular and systematic professional study. Experience has taught me that the weekly expense of thought in two sermons on the Sunday requires a stock of sound and well-digested knowledge which I have been quite unable to acquire in the midst of parochial duties, and which I sadly neglected to lay in before I entered upon them.

The state of the College seems to have decidedly improved by this time. Mr. Venn's old friend and contemporary, Joshua King, was now the leading spirit, and with his great ability and boundless energy, seemed destined to important work in the University or elsewhere. His brother John Venn was also now in residence; for, having completely broken down with fever in India, he had given up his appointment and come to Cambridge with the view of taking orders.

He threw himself heartily into the work of the place, being soon appointed Lecturer and Dean, and during the latter part of his stay being an assistant tutor, with Mr. King. He secured a fair amount of time for study, principally in theology, with a view to the B.D. degree, which the statutes of the College then required. But he also wisely took the opportunity of attending lectures on several other subjects—for instance, those of Mr. Smyth, the then popular Professor of Modern History. He also laid the foundations of a very fair amateur knowledge of medicine, attending the lectures of Dr. W. Clark, and making a practice of attending at Addenbrooke's Hospital. He used to say that one of his reasons for this study was the anxiety and disturbance which he had often felt when in attendance on the sick, from his ignorance of their real physical condition. This interest he retained to the last, and we children had ample evidence of his wisdom

and knowledge in connection with our ailments, and of the care with which he scrutinised every prescription. When we were living at Highgate, about 1846, a man climbed into the garden and drowned himself in the pond. I remember being roused by my father's energetic call for hot-water bottles, and his instant resort to every appliance for restoring the apparently inanimate. To this particular subject, as it happened, he had given careful attention long before ; as I find, amongst some College note-books, an abstract of a lecture by Prof. Clark on the treatment of the apparently drowned.

He held the office of Proctor during the academical year 1825-26, an office which was then decidedly more onerous and unpleasant than it is now. One affray in which he was engaged was serious, and might have led to dangerous results. He was suddenly summoned with his friend King, who was then Moderator, to quell a sort of riot which had grown out of a November town-and-gown row. When they arrived upon the scene, in St. Mary's Passage, the mob, having routed the undergraduates, turned upon the University authorities. They attacked them with fists and stones, kicked and pelted them with mud, and more or less hurt them both. Such an outrage as this naturally could not be passed over. A prosecution was conducted by the University against the principal offenders at the summer assizes of 1826, several of whom received sentences of imprisonment.

So high an opinion did he leave behind him of his tact and firmness in the conduct of this office that his advice was asked by the Proctor of the day, some thirty-five years afterwards, on the occasion of a more than usually serious dispute between the University and the town. After giving some account of his experiences, he says :—

At the end of my year of office only two such houses [of notorious ill-fame] existed : one within the town jurisdiction, and one at Trumpington. In both instances I instituted prosecutions on the evidence which I had obtained. . . . We regarded it as a part of our duty to exercise the power we possessed as a means of reclaiming the women, by communicating with their friends, procuring their removal from Cambridge, etc. Steps of this kind were taken in nearly twenty cases.

There is also a ludicrous side to these experiences. Mr. Venn used to relate how, on one occasion, when pursuing a delinquent student in a waste part of the town, the fugitive suddenly disappeared down some open pit or well. As soon as he was gone from sight, however, he was heard reassuring his pursuer, who was tumbling after him, by the announcement that he had reached the bottom.¹

During the last year of his stay in Cambridge he held the newly created office of evening lecturer at St. Mary's. To this he was appointed by the vicar, Mr. Musgrave, afterwards Archbishop of York. Evening services were not then an entire novelty in the town, for Simeon had introduced them into his own church—against bitter and persistent opposition—many years before, but they were still sufficiently novel to be looked at with great suspicion by the more conservative of the University authorities. Mr. Venn says in a letter (November 6, 1827):—

Last Sunday I began the evening lecture. The congregation was very large, owing to the novelty of the thing. It is very popular with the townspeople, as it ought to be, since it is instituted entirely with a view to the benefit of the parishioners, who have often complained of the unprofitableness of the scholastic addresses which they hear from the University pulpit.

At the time of his leaving Cambridge, Queens' was, by a long way, the third College in the University, numbering as many as 150. One distinctive element was the number of Fellow Commoners. Several of these had been in the army, and had come to Cambridge, after the Peace, with the view of taking orders. They must have added an improving element at the common table.

In the year 1827 he was appointed to the living of Drypool, a commercial suburb of Hull. The presentation on this occasion was in the hands of his old family friend William Wilberforce. Mr. Venn thus describes the place when leaving it in 1834:—

¹ Amongst our childish recollections is that of the discovery, in a cupboard, of an old, roughly cut truncheon. On inquiry as to its use, we were told that it dated from our fathers' proctorial days. It had been designed, not of course for attack, but for defence against the assaults of dogs in the purlieus of Barnwell, who naturally did not side with the Proctor.



Drypool is not a place which every one could or would undertake. The income is improving, and may be stated at £230, but the parsonage house is in a deplorable local situation. . . . It is in itself a good and suitable building, but is placed in a most abominable situation: above a mile from the church, a brick-field in front, the great Holderness drain on one side: the passage to the house, for half a mile, not deserving the name of a road, and utterly impassable for half the year . . . and the population altogether of the lower ranks, with an overwhelming mass of surrounding poverty: about 6000 poor, and none but poor.

He laboured here for nearly seven years, making many friends and introducing all the various parochial schemes now so familiar, Sunday schools, district-visiting, missionary collections, etc. His residence at Hull led to his acquaintance¹ with Martha Sykes, daughter of Nicholas Sykes of Swanland, whom he married at Ferriby, January 21, 1829. None but his nearest relatives knew what this union was to him and to her, and they only realised it as they saw how thirty years of active and laborious widowed life seemed rather to intensify than to dull the love which had found its earthly expression during eleven happy years.

Among the principal local incidents of this time was the invasion of the cholera in 1832. Hull suffered severely from this then little known Eastern pestilence, and was one of the first places at which it began its ravages in England. It must be remembered that the belief was then almost universal that the disease was terribly contagious. The following extract from a letter from Mrs. Venn refers to this date:—

Joseph, Daniel, and Frederick [her brothers] left us on Monday. It was very delightful to me to hear the manner in which Joseph (then an officer in the navy) spoke of Henry, and to see what he chose for praise, especially his *seeing* that the poor people had their houses fumigated when any death from cholera occurred.

The principal relaxation in these days consisted of driving tours about the country, in which way Henry Venn, like his father and grandfather,² acquired a wide and

¹ Or rather re-acquaintance, several members of the two families having already been mutual friends. Nicholas' sister Mary Ann married Henry Thornton of Clapham. A sister of Martha married Matthew Babington of Rothley Temple, Leicestershire. For some account of the Sykes family see the Appendix.

² There is a certain interest in noting the modes of locomotion adopted by successive generations. My great-grandfather naturally went everywhere on horseback; my

accurate knowledge of the features of most parts of England. To us, as children, it seemed difficult to mention a place which he did not remember and could not describe. Their annual visits to London were always made in this manner, and, as in the case of those before him, many of the stopping places were determined by visits to relatives and congenial friends. Now and then more extensive tours were indulged in. Thus, in 1833, when a longer holiday than usual was taken, I find that a journey of about 850 miles was performed, extending through London to the New Forest and Wales, and returning by Lancashire. He kept diaries on most of his expeditions, and his note-books are full of references to the various inns, and suggestions as to the choice of roads. The last of these journeys was to Torquay in 1839, when my mother was pronounced to be in a consumption. In the spring of 1840 he brought us back in the same way as far as Basingstoke, to which place the S.W. Railway had then extended. I was at that time between five and six, and can just remember his calling my attention, as I sat on the box beside him, to the vast open waste of Salisbury Plain, and my being perched on one of the smaller blocks at Stonehenge, in order to get a view of that most impressive of ruins. He was a good driver, and very careful of his horses, the management of which he thoroughly understood. Amongst my early reminiscences is one of his insisting on seeing the horses actually eat the corn which it was the ostler's duty to give them when we stopped to bait.

In 1834 he had the offer of St. John's, Holloway, in the parish of Islington, and then on the outskirts of London. He thus describes it on his first visit :—

The parochial district attached to the church extends from near the top of Highgate Hill for two miles towards London ; stopping just short of Highbury Terrace. The residences are all on the sides of the Great North Road, with green fields beyond on each side.

The move thither was made in the course of the

grandfather kept to the water wherever he could ; my father, by preference, always drove ; I fell in with the then prevalent pedestrianism, and was always on foot ; the generation below will not stir except on a cycle.



ST. JOHN'S, HOLLOWAY, ABOUT 1840-50.
From Contemporary Print.

autumn. One inducement for the change was the prospect of being near his relations, nearly all of whom were then resident in or about London. He also wanted to join more frequently in the work of the Church Missionary Society, though he had not then realised that this work was to become the occupation of his life.

He remained at Holloway for nearly fourteen years. His stay there marked the great change in his work and position, from the zealous parish clergyman to the practical head of one of the great religious organisations in the country. It covered also the principal period of trial and suffering in his life: the loss of his wife and of one child, and two years of severe, and at one time very dangerous illness, in his own case.

There was no parsonage house in a new district like St. John's. After occupying a couple of houses temporarily, Mr. Venn took one in Hornsey Lane (now numbered 9) close to the Archway, and within easy access of the church. The house was inconvenient, and anything but beautiful; but attached to it was one of those magnificent gardens of which so many were then to be found in the suburbs of London. Our childish recollections there are those of the country rather than the town—a large lawn, kitchen-garden, rookery, and pond; a number of exceptionally fine trees; all on the slope of the hill. In the distance, London, and smoky signs of the docks, and ships on the Thames. My father's keen love of out-door life made this garden a great attraction during the very few hours in the week which he could spare for such enjoyment. To the north of Hornsey Lane there was nothing but country. For years we used to ride on our ponies, mostly through the rustic lanes, and by the woods and brooks, which occupied the site of the present Colney Hatch. We could never mention any such ride to my father without its recalling his own occasional rambles there with my mother during the brief years in which she was still able to indulge her love of riding.

Mr. Venn threw himself vigorously into parish work at Holloway. An incident he once mentioned will show how thorough was his knowledge of the people under his

charge. A man came hurriedly one day from a chemist's shop, saying that some unknown person had just obtained a dose of poison, and that his suspicious manners made him fear that suicide was intended. Mr. Venn thought over all his more doubtful parishioners (the population was then about 3000) and formed his conclusion as to the likeliest amongst them. They went at once to the suspected house, which proved to be the one supposed, and were in time to prevent mischief. Besides the now usual parish societies, he introduced a system of occasional lectures on scientific and literary subjects. The work fell mainly upon him, as the system was new, at any rate in that neighbourhood, and lecturers almost impossible to obtain. Very careful schemes of lectures were thus prepared upon a variety of subjects : popular astronomy, the different modes adopted for measuring time, the amphitheatres of Rome, and Arles (he had recently paid a visit to the latter), etc.

During the first few years of his work in London his life was a busy and happy one, a certain amount of his time being devoted to attending committees of the C.M.S., in Salisbury Square. Holidays continued to be taken in the form of driving tours, with occasional visits to Brighton, where several of his Elliott relations were now settled.

The first interruption of this active and happy life was caused by his own severe illness in 1838. This was an attack of dilatation of the heart brought on by his over-exertion in carrying his wife upstairs. She was then expecting her confinement, and he was so anxious not to cause her any anxiety by breaking off the practice which he had continued for many weeks, that he persisted in it to the last, in spite of extreme suffering, and, as it afterwards appeared, of urgent danger to his life. As soon as she was somewhat recovered he consulted a surgeon, who took a very grave view of his condition, and ordered him at once to lay aside all clerical work of every kind. For some time he appeared to be continually losing ground ; but after a few months he put himself under the care of Dr. Jephson of Leamington, then at the height of his great reputation. An autumn and winter spent there proved very beneficial, and after a year, *i.e.* in August

1839, he returned home with every hope of resuming work.

But, alas, symptoms of consumption appeared in my most precious wife. We consulted Chambers: he advised a winter in Italy or Devonshire. I then consulted him about myself: he said at once and decidedly that I was not in working condition, and there was equal need of my absence from the scene of my duty. We therefore went to Torquay. During that sojourn so great were the consolations of Divine grace which overflowed from the heart of my precious wife to refresh my own, that I do not think that I suffered from anxiety or distress from first to last. But the watching by night and the sight of her sufferings, and a settled though composed grief, brought back many symptoms of my old complaint, and my apprehensions of an early dismissal from my desolate lot.

His wife died at Torquay,¹ March 21, 1840. The spirit of enraptured resignation with which he accepted the stroke is almost inconceivable except to the very few gifted with like faith. It was the outcome of perfect devotion and spiritual sympathy with her, and perfect confidence in the Divine love. It is quite true, as Sir L. Stephen says, that "his closest relations used to speak with a kind of awe of the extraordinary strength of his conjugal devotion."

He returned home in the course of the spring, driving us—as I have said—most of the way to London. The doctors whom he consulted on his return declared him still quite unfit for work, and recommended a long and complete rest from all parochial and other labour. To this he could not bring himself to consent. As he said, "I entered into full employment,—the secretaryship of the Ch. Miss. Society, preaching once a Sunday, and keeping a watch over my health, not to go too far; and each summer travelling abroad." These foreign tours,—always in Switzerland,—short as they were, probably contributed much towards his recovery. A large part of the available time was of course spent in getting to and from the country, by long diligence routes or by steam-boats on

¹ She was buried by the side of her sister Anne, in the vault under St. John's, Holloway. The body was taken by sea from Plymouth, Mr. Venn and his brother John accompanying it. After the funeral he returned for a short time to his children at Torquay.

the Rhine ; and mountain travel and mountain inns, as now understood, were quite unknown. But he found in these expeditions the entire change of scene necessary for real relaxation to any active mind, and was enabled to gratify his intense love of beautiful scenery.

From this time onwards his life is almost merged in the work of secretary to the Church Missionary Society. As the history of that Society forms no part of these family memoirs, and has been very fully detailed in the volumes recently published by Mr. Stock, the remaining years of his life must be passed over summarily.

Although he had been for many years a leading member of the Evangelical party, his name was so especially connected with the C.M.S., and his energies so almost exclusively directed to furthering its interests, that it was not till comparatively late in life that he was called on to take a prominent part in Church matters generally. This was in connection with the two well-known Commissions, that on Clerical Subscriptions, and that on Ritual Reform, in both of which he was generally recognised as representing the views of the Moderate Evangelical party. The first of these Commissions was appointed in 1864, and the latter in 1868. In both he took a very active part, and was most sedulous in his attendance at the meetings, in spite of steadily failing strength, and, during part of the time, of serious illness. The results of these Commissions belong to the history of the Anglican Church, and therefore no account of them can be given in these family memoirs.

For a few years after his return from Torquay he tried to combine his missionary with his parochial work. But he soon found the labour too exhausting, and the distance from Highgate to Salisbury Square too great. Accordingly, at Midsummer,¹ 1848, we made a move of two miles towards London, and occupied a house in Highbury Crescent. At the same time we boys left the Cholmondeley School at Highgate, and went to the Islington Proprietary School. The change altogether was a rather melancholy one. The so-called "garden" attached to the new house

¹ He resigned St. John's Church in 1847.

seemed to us a mere yard in comparison with the varied four acres which we had left. All chance of cricket or of other games was lost, and when we tried a walk, which my father continued for years to do on Saturdays, we found that practically there was but one line of exit towards any pretence of hedges and green fields. But the claims of the Society were paramount, and, much as he must have felt the contrast, he never expressed a word of dissatisfaction with his new surroundings.

Years passed away here. His sons left school and went to College. He continued his daily work in Salisbury Square with undiminished energy, and almost undiminished strength, for some twelve years. The immediate cause of our move from Highbury was the serious illness of my sister. The house, situated on the London clay, and within the common range of London fogs, was not very healthy. As school necessities were over, and the railway facilities for getting to and from London were much increased, he looked out for a house on better soil and in a more open situation. These recommendations were secured at East Sheen, Mortlake, and in the course of 1860 the household was transferred thither.

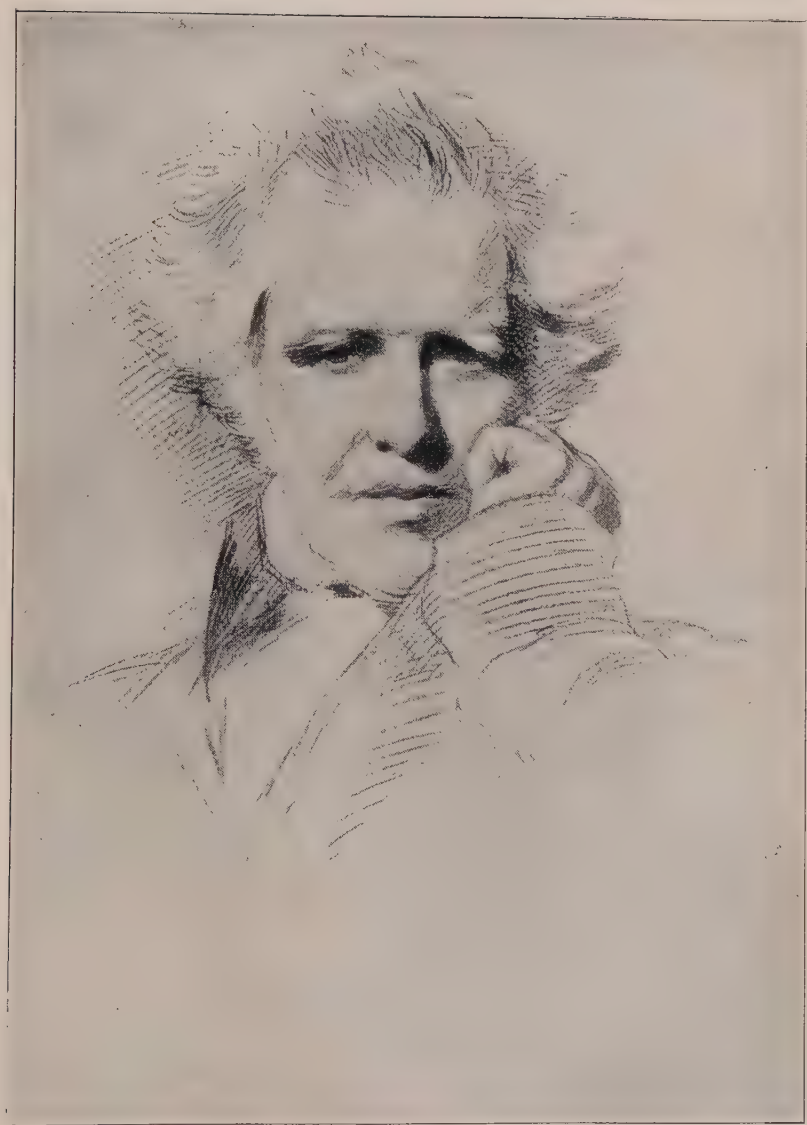
The twelve years that remained were spent in an heroic struggle against gradually increasing infirmity. When he first went to Sheen in 1860 he was still able to enjoy occasional rambles in Richmond Park, and used always to walk to and from the railway station. For several years he was able to spend a short holiday in Scotland or Wales, and enjoyed the scenery and his curtailed expeditions as much as ever. His last visit to Switzerland was undertaken in 1863. After this, increasing lameness and a sharp attack of illness in the summer of 1864 prevented anything beyond brief visits to Malvern or the sea-side. His daughter, throughout her life his companion and assistant, accompanied him almost everywhere, and remained with him to the last. If ever they were separated he wrote to her every day.

This gradual curtailment of physical power in every direction was, to one of his very active and self-reliant disposition, a severe trial, and he found it harder to bear

than the actual pain which continued to increase in frequency and intensity as the years went by. But so little did he complain even to those immediately about him that they only partially realised—and that after some time—how acute the actual suffering was.

The secretariat work went on with undiminished attention for year after year almost to the last. The only change was that, to save bodily fatigue, he adopted the plan of doing the correspondence at home instead of at the office for two or three days in the week. Gradually this became too much, and he definitely resigned the secretaryship in 1872. He still continued to write occasionally to the missionaries with whom he had been long acquainted. His last letter of this kind was to Africa, December 30, 1872, just a fortnight before his death. His handwriting had now become sadly shaken in comparison with the clear and vigorous style formerly so characteristic of him. But the language is full of vigour, and the letter breathes nothing but resignation and hope. The end came at last rather suddenly on January 13, 1873. On the 17th he was buried in Mortlake churchyard.

In family memoirs such as this, personal characteristics naturally deserve full notice. So far as a son can or ought to judge of a father I should sum up his character as follows. He was penetrated through and through with the truth of the doctrines which he had inherited. Young boys are terribly keen critics of the sincerity and consistency of their elders, but (as I have already said) never, under any circumstances of illness, fatigue, or disappointment, can I recall an even momentary lapse from the calm and cheerful resignation with which every trial was accepted. If one may trust report, some of those who live in intimate relation with a preacher are accustomed to hear public denunciations of the worthlessness of riches combined with much private readiness to secure the perilous treasure. For ourselves, we never heard anything of either extreme. Wealth was simply scarcely alluded to. His own income varied but little during the greater part of his life, and was sufficient for



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HENRY VENN, B.D.

From Crayon Sketch by G. Richmond.

comfort. His resignation of his parish made but a slight change, for the outgoings there were considerable, and his secretariat of the Missionary Society was throughout honorary. He was, however, by nature an excellent man of business, and few could give better advice or go into details more carefully where the interests of others were concerned. As executor, guardian, or in similar offices, his attention and sagacity were remarkable.

He shared to the full the old-fashioned distrust and aversion towards "worldly amusements." Theatres, novel-reading, dancing, cards, etc., were never, to the best of my recollection, named or denounced, but the understanding was none the less clear that such things were not for him or his. In respect of fiction his views, I think, were stricter than those of other members of his family. I never saw him take up a novel, or allude even to Walter Scott's prose works, which his sisters certainly read with delight when they came out. When I was a boy there was, to the best of my recollection, only one novel in the house, viz. *Quentin Durward*. How it had effected an entrance I cannot say.

For art, in most of its forms, he had but little taste. As to painting, indeed, he certainly greatly enjoyed Rubens, and I remember his sitting for a long time in the Louvre and expressing his admiration of the rugged and muscular forms in the gallery devoted to the works of that painter. Indeed, one of the attractions of Antwerp to him consisted in the large collection of paintings by Rubens to be found there. For poetry he had, in certain directions, stronger feelings, his taste being mainly towards the eighteenth-century poets. He used in early days not unfrequently to take out a volume from a collection of *British Poets* published in many volumes, which he possessed, and read some favourite piece to us, perhaps from Pope or Dryden. The latest poet¹ whom he really enjoyed was Walter Scott, and our first acquaintance with the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* was gained by his reading it to us as children. When people began to talk of

¹ An exception must be made in the case of some of the religious and speculative poems of Browning. During his last years he loved to hear us read to him such pieces as "Rabbi Ben Ezra," "Saul," "Karshish," etc.

Tennyson he bought the poems and made an effort to study them, but unfortunately beginning with the earliest pages he lighted on "Airy Fairy Lilian," and read no more.

His only keen enjoyment in the way of relaxation was found in natural scenery, especially in its wilder forms. For the mountains his love was very strong, and it must have been no small sacrifice to him to spend his short summer holiday, as he sometimes did, with us at the sea-side instead of indulging in a ramble in Switzerland.

In the matter of politics and the corresponding social questions his interest was subordinated to what seemed to him more important considerations. It may sound strange, in days when party feeling is so sharply emphasised, but I really could not class him, in the ordinary voting sense of the terms, as either "Liberal" or "Conservative"; his support was generally given according to the religious character of the candidate or the religious policy of the leader. Whatever might be his views of Lord Palmerston's personal character, he highly appreciated the fact that he was one of the few statesmen of the day who had a keen and genuine horror of the slave trade. It need hardly be added that the episcopal appointments made during Palmerston's government attracted my father's sympathy and support.

So in scientific matters. Directly he could see his way to any practical result that was likely to aid the religious progress of the natives of West Africa or any other heathen country, he threw himself into the inquiry with the utmost diligence and attention. He early came to the conclusion that the best counter-agency to the slave trade was a conviction on the part of the chiefs that it was more lucrative to employ their people in their own country than to sell them to foreign dealers. Palm oil and cotton seemed the most fitting natural products for this purpose. Accordingly he made frequent visits to Kew, and obtained introductions to leading botanists, in order to learn what were the most hopeful openings for the selection and cultivation of these and other tropical products. Repeated visits were also paid to Manchester to realise what were

the characteristics of the fibres preferred by the spinners there, and what were the chances of the negroes being able to grow marketable kinds of cotton. In these inquiries he found cordial sympathy and valuable help from his friend Mr. Clegg. Similarly with various kinds of scientific apparatus, which he always encouraged the missionaries to make use of. Sometimes valuable instruments were got for use in the native colleges and schools. The first astronomical telescope through which I ever looked was one which had been bought for Sierra Leone, and which had been sent up to his house for inspection. With similar intentions he devoted some study to mountain barometers, first of the old mercury type, which afterwards were superseded by the aneroids. He took considerable trouble in testing their use in our mountain rambles in Wales and in the Highlands of Scotland.

Another subject to which he gave considerable attention at one time deserves notice, for it illustrates the wide range of the discussions which are forced upon the attention of the secretary of one of our large Missionary Societies. This was the subject of a standard alphabet for the uniform printing of Bibles, prayer-books, etc., in heathen languages, especially in the many dialects of Africa. Mr. Venn had much talk and correspondence with the abler and more learned missionaries on this topic, and with various scholars and philologists. At last, mainly through the efforts of Professor C. R. Lepsius of Berlin, a Standard Alphabet was produced and published in 1855. A second edition was issued in 1863.

As my brother was for several years associated with my father in his work at Salisbury Square, and was therefore more intimately acquainted than myself with the daily routine of his life there, he has put together some of his own reminiscences. He says of this life :—

There are scarcely any persons now alive who can describe it from personal recollection as I can do, so I will do my best to draw for others the picture which is so deeply imprinted on my own memory. I am now speaking of the period between 1852 and 1862, which was perhaps the time of our father's greatest activity. The hours were early at 11 Highbury Crescent, for prayers were

at eight, and breakfast a few minutes later. If our father had been working much after 1 A.M., he did not, perhaps, come down till half an hour later, and then prayers followed breakfast. But he would start off for Salisbury Square about nine, usually walking thither for the sake of exercise, the distance being about two and a half miles. The room¹ in which he spent most of his time was of moderate size, and very gloomy to my boyish mind. It had one window, which looked into a tiny court at the back of Salisbury Square, surrounded on three sides by Lloyd's printing office. The clang of the machines seemed continuous during the latter days of the week, for Lloyd's was then almost the only Sunday newspaper. Our father would never allow his room to be furnished with any sort of luxury, or even comfort. The tables, chairs, carpets, book-cases, were all of them old, and grimy with London soot. It was no unusual thing for him to take his seat here at 10 A.M. and not stir from his chair till half past four or five. When the new buildings were occupied, next door to the old ones in Salisbury Square, our father was assigned the best room, with two large windows looking upon the Square; but he absolutely² refused to have any new furniture bought for his use. He only consented, under great persuasion, to accept a new carpet. His faithful and devoted clerk for many years, Mr. Bartlett, used to bring him a cup of coffee (simply made with hot water poured over some extract of coffee) and two penny buns or some such thing, about one o'clock, and this was all the food he took between breakfast and dinner. On Tuesdays there was a Committee meeting, and nearly the whole day was generally spent in discussing one or other of the many intricate and important questions which were incessantly arising. On other days many hours were generally taken up by interviews with one visitor after another. Sometimes it was a missionary just returned from abroad. He would almost certainly be invited to Highbury Crescent to dine and sleep, and be minutely questioned about all the details of his own special work. Sometimes it was a naval officer lately come home from the West African squadron engaged in the suppression of the slave trade. Sometimes a distinguished traveller or a German philologist, with the latter of whom he would discuss the possibility of a standard alphabet for the innumerable languages and dialects of Africa. Occasionally we had negro merchants from Sierra Leone, or a Manchester trader interested in African cotton. No one who had not seen something of the inside working of a great Missionary Society would realise how wide are the interests involved in its

¹ This refers to the old building which was quitted in 1862.

² This was of course only the application in detail of his fixed principle that, in the case of a Society supported by subscriptions, not one penny should be unnecessarily expended on management.

operations, or how many and various are the persons with whom its secretaries are brought into contact.

These visits, interesting and important as they often were, sometimes involved a serious interruption in his work of letter-writing, especially on the foreign mail days, which were then less frequent than they are now. I can remember how often he and Mr. Bartlett remained at the office after every one else had gone, in order to finish important despatches. I can recall this succession of visitors very clearly, because on Wednesday—our school half-holiday—he would sometimes say to me, “If you will be at the office about two, we will go together to see what I told you about.” This was sure to be something interesting, but generally had some connection with the interests of his Society in general, or of Africa in particular. I would be in Salisbury Square by two; and then often came a long time of waiting, as one visitor after another was announced, till at last the pleasant plan had to be abandoned.

As a rule—if one can call that a rule which was constantly broken—we dined at half-past six. But we often waited till seven before he returned. Dinner did not last long, and by eight o’clock—unless there was some missionary or candidate to be interviewed—he was again sitting at his table for a long and hard spell of work. Some persons may possibly read these notes who can recall one of those evenings at Highbury Crescent. He sat in the drawing-room at a table covered with papers. One of us would read aloud the missionary journals or letters which had been last received, whilst he sat with pen in hand making notes of anything which seemed of interest or importance. This went on till ten, when the servants came in to prayers, and we went to bed. Then came the real spell of work. He sat on in his chair for hours after we were all asleep, still reading letters, making abstracts, and writing his despatches. We seldom knew when exactly he did go to bed, for he did not mention this. I believe it was seldom before one in those years, and I know that in April, when he was at work on the Annual Report for the May Meeting, he occasionally wrote on till daylight; and would then express his regret for not being down to breakfast till nine.¹ This is the plain story of many years of the life of the unpaid secretary of the Church Missionary Society.

Let me add a few words to put on record my thoughts about the character of one who has been dead just thirty years. I have seen and known many great and good men since he passed away,

¹ “April 4, 1850.—Began letter-writing at 7.30. Half an hour allowed for breakfast. Half an hour occupied in going to C.M. House. Left off writing at 5.30. Home to dinner at 6.30. Sat down to work at Annual Report at 8” (Extract from Journal). In another year he notes about the preparation of the Report: “Bothered about Sierra Leone Mission. Did not get to bed till 3.”

and I can better appreciate his character than I could when he was alive, but each succeeding year makes me honour and respect his memory more. It was my great privilege to be permitted to assist him in his work from 1861 to 1869. I was therefore brought more closely into connection with him than my brother was. I did not understand at the time how much I was learning from him, but I can never forget the lessons of diligent cheerfulness and devotion to every duty, for these were conspicuous in his life. Any one who met him could see that he was devoted to his work ; but only those who were closely associated with him could understand the spirit in which that work was carried on. Are there many men who could honestly say, after living more than thirty years at home, that they could not recall a single occasion on which their father had lost his temper ? We never heard any denunciations of those who differed from him, or any regrets when his most cherished plans were frustrated. On one occasion he brought forward a scheme which he had elaborated with much care and patience. It was not accepted by the Committee, and he withdrew it without a word more. Some time afterwards a member of the Committee proposed the same scheme, and it was unanimously applauded. He merely sent for his own paper, read it aloud, and then remarked, "I read this to you three months ago, but you would not have it." Nothing seemed to ruffle the natural sweetness of his disposition. Yet we know that committees are not always harmonious, and that sometimes the agents of a great society are unwise, obstinate, or even blameworthy. All the annoyances and all the disappointments fell more heavily on the secretary than on any one else. It was his business to soothe the Committee, and to advise or blame the distant missionary. To most men of tender sympathy, and especially to one who suffered from weakness of the heart, these were times of trial ; but his love and patience carried him through them.

I will add a few words about his parental relations with us. Unlike many parents of decided evangelical opinions, he never spoke much to us about religion. Neither he nor our dear uncle ever forced religious advice upon us. Hereford was another home to us : our uncle John was almost like another father ; yet neither of these wise men ever endeavoured to mould our unformed opinions into any particular pattern. Indeed it was needless for them to preach to us. Their lives spoke far more plainly and convincingly than any words. We saw their patience, cheerfulness, generosity, wisdom, and activity daily before us, and we knew and felt that all this was only the natural expression of hearts given to the service of God.



JOHN VENN, 1820.
From Sketch by J. W. Slater.

JOHN VENN OF HEREFORD

My uncle John was the youngest of my grandfather's family, having been born at Clapham, April 17, 1802. As I first remember him, he was a fine man,—as in fact he remained until the last,—about 5 ft. 10 in. or so in height; rather broad-shouldered and very upright. But, as a result of his illness in India, he always had to be careful of himself, and retained some of the ways of an invalid throughout his life. He was, from a comparatively early age, quite bald. When we were children at Highgate we saw a good deal of him, as, besides other visits, he used to come up annually to London in order to read the Report of the Church Missionary Society at the great May Meeting in Exeter Hall. For this task his exceptionally fine and well-managed voice peculiarly fitted him. In those days he generally wore, in bad weather, a curious long old-fashioned cloak, with brass chain and clasp for the neck. This cloak was somewhat of a family relic. It had been given to his grandfather, Henry, when he left Huddersfield in 1771, as a parish gift from that great centre of the cloth-weaving trade. Both Henry Venn and his son John wore it, especially on riding expeditions, and it was still in excellent preservation when in use by my uncle, in the third generation. He finally gave it to a Scripture reader of his parish, on whose shoulders it became a centenarian, and from whom I heard of it, as still in existence and in occasional use, about 1890. My uncle used to tell of the effect he once produced at a missionary meeting at Huddersfield, when—alluding to his old family connection with the place, and the kindness of the people—he mentioned this gift, and

then held up the cloak to the audience, saying, "Here it is!"

His early life was a much more varied one than that of most of his family. He was first sent to a small private school at Clapham, kept by a Mr. Greaves,¹ which was frequented by several of the boys of the neighbouring families. One of these was "Tom" Macaulay, as the historian was then called: a timid, book-loving boy, and therefore regarded as a coward by his playfellows. He lived in some terror of little John Venn, who was his junior by two years; and when his father used to bring him to the rectory, and leave him there with the injunction "to play with Johnny Venn," he generally contrived to slip away into a cloak-room or cupboard with a book. If found, he was routed out on to the common and harried by his companions. Thence he would endeavour to escape, and if discovered would generally be found hidden among the furze bushes declaiming poetry.

After leaving Mr. Greaves' school my uncle went for a year to one at Bewdley, kept by a Mr. Cawood.² From thence he went to Harrow, his brother Henry considering, from his own experience, that there was little chance of his acquiring the accuracy and discipline of a good classical training except at one of the few large public schools. He was entered there June 28, 1814, but not as a boarder; his family—then under the charge of their aunt Jane (*v. p.* 109)—having taken a house at Harrow, for the purpose of keeping him with them. Another tie with the place was found in the presence of the vicar, Mr. J. W. Cunningham, who had been curate at Clapham, and who remained a lifelong friend of all the family.

Harrow school was delightfully situated, and the boys had plenty of time to play. They had a good-sized pond about a mile from the hill to bathe and fish in, a magnificent cricket-

¹ "John Venn, the rector, had, in conjunction with Mr. Thornton, made a happy selection of a schoolmaster under whose charge they (the young African natives brought to England) were placed. This man, Mr. William Greaves, who came from Yorkshire, did his duty thoroughly by his pupils." After the failure of this scheme for the Africans, many of the resident Clapham gentry continued to send their sons to Mr. Greaves for tuition (*Z. Macaulay, Life, p. 237*).

² Rev. John Cawood, M.A., of St. Edmund Hall, Oxford. I cannot conjecture the reasons for this distant choice, as nothing seems to be known of him in the family.

ground, and a good open space round three sides of the school for football—and, will it be believed, a piece of ground adjoining this open space, but several feet lower and separated from it by a wall, for the boys to fight in, whilst the wall was crowded with lookers-on. Oh, what battles I have seen there! I have seen faces covered with blood, and the eyes bunged up. I have seen a poor fellow with one of his fingers dislocated, so as to be unable to use the hand, continuing to fight with the other hand. And nobody interfered to put a stop to the brutal work.

After two years at Harrow, my father, who throughout exercised a quite parental care over him, became dissatisfied with his progress. Henry Venn was then an undergraduate at Queens', and pending the decision as to another school, took his young brother to live with him for a few months in College.

In the interval I went to Cambridge, and took up my quarters with my brother; and Mr. Musgrave,¹ younger brother of the Bishop of Hereford, was kind enough to let me come to him as a pupil. I went very regularly to Mr. Musgrave's rooms every day, excepting upon one occasion. I was going with my books under my arm, and was walking by the road at the back of the Colleges, when suddenly a hunting-party appeared with the hounds, on their way into the country. This was more than I could resist. I at once followed the hounds, with my books under my arms, opening the gates for the riders, and keeping well up with them. They did not, however, start any game, or I should have soon been left behind. This was the only hunt I ever joined in either at home or abroad.

My brother's inquiries as to what schools were, at this time, sending up the best scholars to Cambridge, decided him in favour of the Charterhouse, which was then beginning to acquire the great reputation which it obtained under Dr. Russell.

What a difference was there between the teaching at Harrow and at the Charterhouse. Dr. Russell was the head-master, and had only a little time before taken his degree at Oxford. The other masters rebelled at his being put over them. But he was a match for them. He did without them, and he filled their houses with boarders. There was one very large room, in which all the boys were assembled. Dr. Russell appointed a senior boy to be the head of each class, and then he rushed about from one class to another,

¹ Thomas and Charles Musgrave were sons of a well-known tailor in Cambridge, They both became Fellows of Trinity. Thomas was afterwards Bishop of Hereford, 1837-47, and Archbishop of York, 1847-60. His brother Charles became Archdeacon of Craven, and was for some years vicar of Halifax.

saying to them, "Shut your books : repeat such an ode of Horace, or such a passage in Virgil, or construe them." Everything they had once learned by heart they were never to forget, and they might at any time be examined in it.

My uncle at this time lived with his family, going to school every day. Their house was No. 14 Mabledon Place, near the present St. Pancras Station, Euston Road. They had moved thither from Harrow, in or about 1816, in order that John might continue to be with them during his school time.

After he had been here for about two years, an opening occurred which the rather narrow means of his family put it out of the question for them to refuse. This was the offer of a writership in India, which was due to the kindness of two intimate friends¹ of his father, Mr. Grant and Mr. Parry, who desired in this way to show their affection to the late rector of Clapham.

At the age of sixteen I went to Haileybury College,² having obtained a writership for Bengal. The East India Directors had at that time the government of India in their own hands, and appointed all the civilians. Two of the Directors were most intimate friends of my father, and each of them claimed the privilege of giving a writership to me, as the son of one whom they so loved and revered.

One of my earliest days at Haileybury I never shall forget ; and I shudder even now when I think of what might have happened to me. It was on a Saturday night, and I had been washing my feet, when suddenly I heard the sound of many voices in the passage into which my door opened, and then there was a violent kicking at it. I instinctively took up the tub with all the water in it, and held it up ready to hurl it at the intruders. In a moment the door burst open, and a tall man with a mask on his face and a white sheet over his body rushed at me. I had not a moment to reflect, and I lifted up the tub and hurled all the contents at him. He then made another rush at me ; but I again lifted up the tub, and was just on the point of throwing the tub itself at him when he made an immediate retreat amongst the shouts of laughter of his friends. I never can think even now of this scene without thanking God that I had not severely hurt or

¹ For Charles Grant see p. 124 ; and for Edward Parry, p. 125.

² Then, and until 1857, the training place for those who had been appointed to writerships under the East India Company ; Addiscombe being their corresponding military college.

even killed him. If I had struck him upon his head, or indeed any part of his body, the consequences might have been most serious or even fatal. The tub was of china, and very heavy. I was strong and not a little excited. I never had any further annoyance of this sort whilst I was at Haileybury.

Here too, as at Harrow, fighting was allowed. But they fought here with what they called "single-sticks." I remember one terrible battle between two of the students, in which one of the men, after they had been knocking each other about in a fearful way, suddenly made a great effort and struck his opponent violently on the head. The poor fellow fell down, and for a short time he was insensible. He recovered, however, after a little time, and his first words were "I forgive you." He saw that his opponent was terribly distressed.

The Professors at Haileybury were a very able set of men ; and amongst them was the Professor of Political Economy, the well-known Malthus. The great idea upon which Malthus was always harping was the terrible increase of our population. He was continually setting before us the fearful rate at which the population was increasing ; and gravely did he urge upon us, young lads as we were, the duty and necessity of our never having more than three children when we became husbands. Indeed, he was so constantly harping upon this theme that we always called him "old Pop." What he said, indeed, was plausible, considering the state of things at that time, when the power of steam as applicable to navigation was never dreamed of.

I succeeded in getting a great number of prizes ¹ at Haileybury ; and amongst others a prize for Sanskrit. But it was the merest chance by which I got it. The Bengal students were not obliged to learn it ; but if the Madras and Bombay students should not be able to stand the examination then the Bengal students might compete for the prize. Now there was a friend of mine who knew something of Sanskrit, but was not going himself into the examination, and he offered to cram me if I liked it. I accepted his offer, and then he went with me through a certain passage,

¹ First prize, with gold medal, for Classics, Mathematics, Law, and Sanskrit ; the same, divided with another student, for Political Economy ; and prizes of books for Hindustani and English Essay. In the whole history of the College only one or two students were equally successful. Zachary Macaulay (*Life*, p. 355) thus alludes, in a letter, to his success : "The second son goes out to India in a few weeks with higher honours on his head, both literary and moral, than any young man has yet carried away from the East India College." He showed similar diligence and success in his examinations at the College of Fort William, Calcutta, where he was reported, July 16, 1821 : "In the class of this last examination Mr. Venn stands *pre-eminently* distinguished." He was first in Persian, where "his proficiency acquired for him a medal of merit." They add that but for illness he would probably have stood first in Hindustani.

These medals he, very characteristically, gave, in after life, to a Bible Society deputation for the benefit of that Society, who informed him that they fetched
£24 : 10s.

assuring me that the examiners would give it me to translate. I got the passage well up, and was then examined in it and was awarded the prize.

Amongst the seventy or eighty students there were only two or three who seemed to have any religious feelings. One young fellow, in the term above mine, called one day upon me and told me that he wished to be religious, and that he had heard that I never swore or got drunk, etc., and that he should like to become intimate with me and to read the Scriptures with me. We became great friends; but when we left Haileybury he went to Madras and I went to Calcutta; and he remained in India for many years, whilst I returned to England at the end of my first year.

After two most pleasant years spent at Haileybury I took leave of my family. No one can tell what was involved in going to India as a civil servant in those days. The voyage was most expensive, and it required months to get there. I was half a year, both in going to, and in returning from Calcutta. Few civilians returned home within twenty years; and oh, what changes had often taken place within that time! Indeed, few civilians ever returned home at all. And parents who had sent their children home when they were very little ones, sometimes could not identify their grown-up sons and daughters. No wonder then, when I parted from my family, we embraced each other with sobbing and weeping. My brother Henry read the 91st Psalm, and then we knelt down to pray. With the utmost difficulty he got through our last family prayer; and then he and I left the room to enter the post-chaise which was to take us to Gravesend. But I paused for a few moments on the steps leading down to the pavement. "Oh," I said to myself, "I cannot go; I will give up my appointment." But I felt it was too late now to change my mind. I do not know how I got into the carriage. But I did get into it, and my brother followed me, and the driver started the horses. We slept at Gravesend, and after an early breakfast we went down to the waterside, and I got into a boat which was waiting to take me to the ship, which was lying at anchor a little distance from the shore. My brother gave me a sad farewell look and then turned away, and the boat pushed off and took me to the *Boyne*. Nearly seventy years have passed since that day; and my brother, sisters, my aunt, and my brother-in-law, so dear to me (James Stephen), have all passed away; and I have forgotten things without number that happened in times long past; but never have I forgotten, and never shall I forget, so long as memory lasts, those last days I spent in England before embarking for India.

Among the many presents which I had received, there was

one which was given to me by a beloved brother-in-law, James Stephen, viz. the pictures of every member of my family by an artist who was very successful in taking likenesses, all bound up together in one large volume. How often did I go down into my cabin, and open this book of pictures and look at them with a sad heart, and feel that I would give anything to see those beloved ones once more face to face.¹

It was six months before the *Boyne* reached Calcutta, but there was a most pleasant party on board, consisting of old Indians, on the one hand, who were returning after two or three years spent in their native land, and young cadets, civilians, and ladies going out for the first time. There were also two clergymen going out to take charge of the Bishop's College which had just been established. One of these clergymen was a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, a Mr. Mill (afterwards the well-known Dr. Mill, Canon of Ely and Regius Professor of Divinity); and such a man for extensive and accurate knowledge of almost all subjects, including music,² I have scarcely ever met with, before or since. Notwithstanding his knowledge and talents, he was as humble and meek and unassuming a man as I ever knew. He was then only twenty-eight years old.

On Sunday morning we were off Dover or Deal, I forget which, and there we anchored for the day. Some of us went on shore to attend the morning service; and, to my great surprise and joy, I heard one of my beloved father's sermons preached by the clergyman. He did not tell his people that he was preaching a sermon of Mr. Venn's that had been published; and little did he think that a son of Mr. Venn was one of his hearers. But I was too touched and delighted at hearing my father speak to me, as it were, as I was taking my leave of England to go to the far-off land of India with the expectation of spending in it the next twenty years or more of my life.

We passed Brighton in the night; and as I gazed upon the long line of lights I thought of the many pleasant days I had spent there under the roof of my dear cousins the Elliotts, who had for years past gone from Clapham to Brighton for the summer.

As we got further south everything about the sea was full of interest to me: the shoals of bonito swimming just ahead of the vessel; and the Mother Carey chickens flying about it; and the huge albatrosses floating by from time to time; and the sharks now and then hooked and brought on deck and cut up, with every piece of their flesh trembling and quivering for some time

¹ These pictures are now in my possession.

² The tedium of the voyage was partly relieved by Mr. Mill dictating a treatise on music to my uncle.

afterwards, and their very hearts, after being cut out, continuing to beat ; and sometimes a huge whale swimming by the side of the vessel for hours together—all was full of interest to me. And then, as I never saw the tree on land which I could not get to the top of, so I could get to the tops of the masts. On one occasion, indeed, I was in the greatest danger of being dashed to pieces. I had got up to the top of the mainmast, and then I determined to go to the next mast by hanging on with my hands to the comparatively thin rope which joins them, and going hand over hand from the one mast to the other. But when I had got about half way my strength failed me. I thought I must have fallen and been dashed to pieces. All who were on deck were horrified and gave me up, expecting me every moment to fall. I made a great effort, however, and got my arm over the rope ; and after resting for a short time I was enabled to reach the mast and to come down the rigging in safety.

Upon another occasion, it was well that I did not lose all my teeth. A party of us were on deck after dinner, and, by way of amusement, I offered to take up any one of them in my mouth and shake him. A tall young officer in the army challenged me to lift him up and shake him. I accepted the challenge, and he lay down upon his face. I took out my handkerchief and put it under his body, and the ends of it in my mouth, and having gently shaken him I put him down again safely. The purser, who was a taller and a stouter man than myself, exclaimed, "I can do that !" "Do it, then," we all cried. The young officer again lay down upon his face, and the purser put his handkerchief under him, and the ends of it in his mouth, and lifted him up a little above the deck, when the young officer fell out of his jaws, and with him half a dozen of the poor purser's teeth. We were cruel enough to laugh at his failure ; but he in a moment picked up his teeth and then rushed down into his cabin, and it was some time before he appeared again. I had taken care to knot the ends of my handkerchief and to lay the handkerchief along the *back* teeth, so that the knotted ends might press against the whole line. The poor purser put the handkerchief in a lump into his mouth in such a way that the pressure was thrown upon the front teeth, which were unable to bear it.

My uncle used to tell of one exciting incident on their voyage out which nearly resulted in the total loss of all on board. The ship struck on a sandbank in the Bay of Bengal, during a heavy sea, at night. He heard the captain and mate discussing their chances, and deciding that no small boat could possibly live in the surf. The ship seemed about to go to pieces, when a sudden change

of wind enabled them to back off. He remembered one amusing incident occurring during the agony of that night. There was a young and attractive girl on board, of whom he had seen a good deal during the voyage. As they were taking farewell he asked her if there were any papers or small articles which she would like to hand over to him, in case by any chance he should get to land on a piece of wreck or otherwise. The poor girl reappeared from her cabin in a few moments with a large desk, begging him to take that. Many years afterwards, at a clergyman's house in the country, he happened to mention this incident, when the lady of the house replied, "Why, that was my mother ! she often told me of that experience."

When my grandfather, Henry Venn, was at Yelling, three undergraduates,¹ viz., Thomason, Jerram, and Flavel, one day rode on horseback to Mr. Venn's house and introduced themselves as young men who were anxious about their souls and wanted direction and encouragement from him. It was that visit which, humanly speaking, many years afterwards saved my life when I was unprepared to die, and sheltered me from temptations which might have been the ruin of my soul. My brother had seen Mr. Thomason when he was in England, or at all events had heard of his devoted piety and wisdom ; and when I left England he made me promise to call upon Mr. Thomason as soon as I reached Calcutta, and to take no step without consulting him. On my arrival, therefore, in Calcutta, I got into a sort of hackney coach, and drove to Mr. Thomason's house, which was in the same enclosure as his church, known as the Red Church. In driving, however, to Mr. Thomason's, I passed by the Writers' Buildings, as they were called, *i.e.* the College for the young civilians ; and having received a letter before I left my ship, from one of my Haileybury friends a year my senior, asking me to "chum" with him, *i.e.* to occupy with him a common sitting-room with its adjoining bedroom. As I walked up the steps I heard the clattering of knives and forks and the merry sounds of youthful voices ; and I just got high enough up the stairs to see my friend at the head of his table, as full of health and merriment as any of them, and then I gave my card to one of the servants, and retired unseen by the party. On my arrival at the Thomasons' they at once insisted on my taking up my residence with them. The *next* evening at about 6 o'clock, as I was driving with my friends

¹ Thomas Thomason, B.A. of Magdalene, 1796 ; Charles Jerram, B.A. Magdalene, 1797, afterwards vicar of Witney, Oxon ; John Flavel, B.A. Clare, 1797.

the Thomasons, in their open carriage on the Course, we met a funeral procession, and amongst the mourners I saw one of the Professors of the College. This led me to ask whose funeral it was, and I found that it was the funeral of my friend whom I had seen the day before in such high spirits. He had dined out that evening, and had come home quite well, and went to bed as usual. At 12 o'clock he was attacked with cholera, died in two or three hours, and was buried at six that very evening. (My uncle used to say that the incident excited the more attention, as the disease was but little known at the time, and Europeans were not supposed to be very liable to it.)

I was intent upon distinguishing myself, and studied incessantly. Even at my meals I had a book generally on my knees, at which I kept peeping as often as I possibly could without being perceived by Mr. and Mrs. Thomason. When, at the end of the year, the examination took place, I obtained gold medals for Sanskrit, Arabic, Bengali, and Hindustani.

The young civilians in Calcutta were always invited to dine at Government House before they finished their College course. In accordance with this custom I received and accepted the invitation which in due time came to me. Whilst we were waiting for the announcement of dinner we formed ourselves into little groups, and in the group in which I stood was that wonderful man, Carey, Professor of Sanskrit in the College of Fort William. Close by this group was an officer of high rank, who was standing in the midst of another group of guests. This officer asked one of his group in a low voice if it was true that Professor Carey was once a shoemaker? In a moment Carey stepped forward and said, "No, General, I never was a shoemaker." The General was quite distressed, and apologised for having for a moment entertained such a thought, observing that he had not had the slightest idea that the Professor could have overheard him. Carey again protested that he never was a shoemaker, and again the General vehemently apologised. It was rather a painful scene to us all. But in a moment we were all convulsed with laughter by Carey's saying very calmly, "No, General; I never aspired to be a shoemaker. I was only a cobbler!"

When we were summoned into the drawing-room the music and dancing commenced. I had never seen a dance before, and I have never seen one since. But how I pitied the ladies. The long hair of them was flapping about their shoulders, and the perspiration was streaming down the faces and necks of them all. The Governor-General was kind enough to come to me and say a few words to me; but they were not very edifying. He exhorted me, indeed, to keep to my studies, and get as quickly through the College as I could; but the motive to which he

appealed had not much weight with me, for he said, "And then you will be able to engage in the noble sport of hog-hunting."

Suttees were not prohibited when I was in India. I well remember, when I was one morning walking by the side of the river a few miles above Calcutta, seeing a poor widow on the opposite side of the river ascend a pile of wood on which the corpse of her husband was laid. Whether she was in any way bound or not, I could not see. But the flames soon ascended, and the people appeared to be drawing around the pile till the bodies were burnt.

In due time I went in to the examination, and was very successful, obtaining four gold medals; and I at once received a good appointment in Calcutta, with a liberal salary. But I never entered upon its duties. I was suddenly taken ill. My head felt as if it were being cleft by a hatchet. I went to bed, and the doctor was at once sent for. His name was Macwhirter, and he was considered one of the best medical men in Calcutta. In those days quinine was unknown, I suppose, as none was given to me; and the only remedies applied were, bleeding me till I fainted away, and then dosing me with mercury or calomel. It never, however, occurred to me that I was in danger till Mr. Thomason came in to see me, and knelt down by my bedside and prayed for me as if I were a dying man. When he was gone I asked Mrs. Thomason if the doctor thought I should die. Her only answer was, "May God spare one so precious to us!" Then for the first time I felt I was in danger; and I knew that I was unprepared to die, and the fear of being lost for ever filled me with unutterable horror. Then one and another came and looked at me with a countenance terribly sad. They said nothing, but their looks seemed to say, "Farewell: we shall see you no more." The physician said nothing to me, but I found out afterwards that he went to the undertakers and told them to look out for a coffin for a man of such and such dimensions.

The result of this illness was that he was invalided home, with the promise that on his return in better health his post should be still open for him.

I had a return of fever on my voyage home, and the doctor came to see me, and at once used very strong remedies. He then left me for half an hour or so, and returned followed by the cabin boy with a tray and six large cups upon it. "What is that for, doctor?" I asked; and his answer was, "Oh, I am going to fill them all with your blood." I submitted of course, but it weakened me very much.

As we were coming home in the *Fairley* we were hailed by an

outward-bound vessel. We hove to, and a boat was let down and came towards us with a young military officer in it, who looked very pale and feeble. He was helped, by the sailors who rowed him, to get into our ship ; and then they gave several hearty cheers as they took leave of him and rowed back to their own vessel. We were all looking with pity at this pale young soldier as he walked with difficulty through the line we had formed. When he came near me he fixed his eyes upon me and said, "It is ; it must be ; but no, it can't be." I said, "Who, sir, did you think I was ?" "Why, sir," he replied, "you are as like a friend of mine, George Babington, as possible ; and yet I left him in England." Mr. Babington was one of my intimate friends, and we were so like each other that once, when I called at the hospital which he attended, the door-keeper opened the door and then stood on one side, without asking a question, and wondered that I did not come in. In consequence of this I felt, of course, an interest in this young soldier ; and as there was no spare cabin for him, I gladly gave up my cabin to him for the nights and slept between decks, and shared the cabin with him by day. This sick young soldier was a son of the Rev. Mr. Symons of Paul's Cray, who had been a friend of my father. When we landed at Portsmouth, late in the evening, we at once took a post-chaise and travelled up to Paul's Cray, which we reached early in the morning, and I delivered him into the hands of his parents. He died soon after. On our way to London we passed by Stratton Park (not far from Winchester), where Sir Thomas Baring lived.¹ It was almost a year since I had heard anything of my family ; and I was most anxious to hear how they were, and indeed whether they were all alive. We drove up, therefore, to the house, though it was between eleven and twelve o'clock at night. I found that Lady Baring was downstairs, but that all the rest of the family had retired to their bedrooms.

He was glad to be assured that, so far as known, his family was in health.

When my uncle left India his appointment was reserved for him, and he had at the time hopes that in a year or so he would be able to return thither. In the meantime he resided with his family in Mabledon Place. This was in 1822. In the course of a year it became apparent that his health was still such as made it very doubtful whether he would be able to stand the Indian climate. Accordingly he resigned the service, and resolved to enter at Cambridge.

¹ His son Francis Baring, afterwards Lord Northbrook, had been a pupil of John Venn's father, and remained a lifelong friend of my father and uncle.

His brother was at this time a curate at St. Dunstan's in the West, and was living at Mabledon Place ; but, being a Fellow of Queens' College, and looking forward to returning there before long, John naturally went to the same College, where he was admitted by his brother, October 15, 1823.

Here he had a very successful career, gaining not only a scholarship and several College prizes, but also securing the distinction of the Bell University Scholarship. He came out eleventh wrangler in the tripos list of 1827, and was not long afterwards elected to a fellowship at his College. Queens' was at that time in a very flourishing condition, under the tutorship of Joshua King, afterwards President, who was then conspicuous for his energy and abilities. My uncle, of course, allied himself with the Evangelical party at the University, which, though still numerically small, was beginning to outgrow its days of ridicule and persecution. Naturally, from grounds of hereditary friendship, as well as community of sentiment, he saw much of Simeon. Simeon had then nearly, but not quite, got past the stage of obloquy and insult which marked the early days of his preaching at Trinity Church. Still, recurrences of this kind were occasionally noticed. My uncle remembered, for instance, a student coming in one Sunday evening during service, and at a momentary pause opening the door and shouting out "Charley" in a way which completely disturbed the preacher. They would also often come in after their wine, stroll up the aisle and deliberately stare at him. Simeon's powers of managing a voice not naturally powerful are well known. He took great pains with my uncle's training in this respect, and probably never had a more acceptable pupil. He used to give him a passage to prepare, would then hear him repeat it, and would give illustrations of how it should be read. As an instance of the immense pains Simeon himself would take to secure a good delivery, he mentioned an instance which occurred at Hereford in after years. Shortly before his death Simeon came to preach for him at St. Peter's. It was an old sermon with which he was perfectly familiar, but he studied it carefully every day till the Saturday, and

on that day repeated it several times in order to make his delivery as effective as possible.

In addition to the natural gift of a splendid voice, my uncle had a very strong taste for music, and considerable knowledge of it practically ; at least of vocal music, for he did not, I think, perform on any instrument. In his days there was no University Musical Society, but he used to practise a great deal with a few of his friends, amongst whom was Carus, afterwards a Canon of Winchester. I remember many years later, when he was on a visit to us at Cambridge, we went on the Sunday afternoon to King's Chapel. As it happened, it was a day or two after the death of Bishop Wilberforce of Winchester, in 1873, and the *Dead March* and the *Sleepers, Wake* were given there unexpectedly to us, in the usual admirable style. The effect upon him of such music, on such an organ, was almost overwhelming, and to his last day he never ceased occasionally to refer to it.

Of the sort of religious activity with which he was afterwards so much occupied there was, of course, little or none in the University then, the residents, though now for the most part perfectly decorous, being of the driest and most anti-enthusiastic type. He used to tell of a meeting at which he was present, I believe, for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, of which old Dr. Wood, Master of St. John's, was chairman. Wood opened the proceedings rather unnecessarily by a strong deprecation "of any appeal to the feelings." With this start the six or seven selected speakers all came to an end, in successive agreement each with his predecessor, in some quarter of an hour. But for Sedgwick, who came to the rescue with a lively little speech, the whole meeting would have collapsed.

The following are some of his reminiscences of Cambridge life :—

I became acquainted with that wonderful man Professor Lee. Mr. Lee had been a common carpenter, and was on one occasion sent by his master to do some work in the house of a rich gentleman in the neighbourhood. This gentleman had a good library ; and one day went into the study at the workmen's dinner hour, and to his surprise saw Lee reading one of his books. In those days it

was a rare thing for a working man to be able to read, and the gentleman began to ask him how he had learned and what books he had read. He then found that this carpenter was a man of rare talent ; used to read and master a book, and then sell it and buy another. He was at once taken up by some friends and sent to Cambridge, and entered at Queens' College.

I also saw a good deal of Professor Farish, my father's friend, and one of my guardians ; and regularly attended his church (the old church of St. Giles', since pulled down). He was very absent-minded. On one occasion when his servant brought his horse to the door¹ he mounted it, and, to the surprise of his servant, dismounted it again on the other side and walked quietly away, till the shouts of his servant brought him back again.

He was Professor of Mechanics, and some of the early promoters of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway took the occasion of a visit which he paid to the north of England to ask his opinion on several points concerning the means of locomotion to be adopted, amongst others as to the limits of safe speed.

They asked him at what rate they might go if they made a railway such as he suggested. The Professor paused for some little time, and—as I often saw him do—rested his elbow upon the table and looked up at the ceiling. He said, "Well, gentlemen, I can now answer your question. If you adopt my suggestions, then you will be able to go thirty miles an hour with perfect safety ; and if you wished you *could* go sixty miles an hour ; but I should advise you to be satisfied with thirty." The committee looked at one another, and asked no more questions. The Professor, on his return to Cambridge, called upon a friend whom I knew intimately, and who told me the story, and said to him, "I have been thinking over the whole matter, and feel perfectly satisfied that I am right. I am going to London to see Mr. Huskisson, and to propose that the Government should make railways throughout the kingdom, and to assure him of my conviction that they might derive such a profit as might in time almost pay off the national debt." Before Farish could communicate with Huskisson the fearful news came of the accident, and death of the latter, at the opening of the railway. The intimate friend of his and mine, to whom I have referred, asked

¹ He lived in what is called Merton House, at the backs of the Colleges. One of his ingenious contrivances there is still in existence. It consisted of a movable partition which could be screwed up and down, so as to convert a large bedroom into two separate rooms when two guests were on a visit. Tradition has it that with his usual absence of mind he one night proceeded to remove the partition when both rooms were occupied, one by a lady and the other by a gentleman.

him why he did not go to London and make his suggestion. His answer was, "Huskisson was my pupil, and knew me well, and would have listened to me. No other member of the Government would pay any regard to what I might say. They would think I was in my dotage or out of my mind."

The President, Isaac Milner, was the son of poor parents in Yorkshire, and brother of Joseph Milner, author of the *Church History*. A little girl, called Ruth Clark, was living in the same court as the two Milners; and they were great playfellows together. That little girl became a servant¹ of my grandfather's when he was living at Yelling. She was a most intelligent and devoted Christian, and my brother published a life of her entitled *The Single Talent well Employed*. When my grandfather died my father got a little house for her in Clapham, and there she spent the remainder of her days. When she died I was taken to see her. It was the first dead body I had ever seen, and I remember to this day the wonder and strange feelings I felt as I gazed upon her.

Isaac Milner was a great talker; and even when at Mr. Wilberforce's—who everywhere else led the conversation—he was the centre of attraction. I well remember when a sister of mine was visiting the Farishes, and called on Dr. Milner, whom she had met at Mr. Wilberforce's and become well acquainted with. The doctor called out to her, just as she had got to the bottom of the stairs, to remind her of some engagement; and when my sister asked him if he was *sure* of being able to meet her on the appointed day, he thundered out to her, "Sure?—there is nothing sure but death and taxes!" On one occasion he was travelling with a friend—I think it was Mr. Wilberforce—and they stopped at an inn for the night. After supper Milner began to tell a ghost story. Every one came to the door, which had been left ajar, and listened with intense interest. Milner perceived this, but took no notice and went on with his story. Suddenly he shouted out, "And there the ghost is at the door!" Instantly the servants, men and women, were seized with panic, and rushing away tumbled one over the other, to the great amusement of the party. And yet this strong-minded man trembled whenever there was a thunderstorm, and would rush down into the cellar, wherever he was, when he heard it. The explanation of this was as follows. One day he was travelling in his carriage when a tremendous thunderstorm suddenly overtook him just as he was entering into a town. The lightning was terrific, and he hastened to take shelter in an inn. There was a school of little children close by, and the lightning struck three of them dead just as he entered the inn.

¹ There are many references to her in Henry Venn's correspondence, and to the esteem and affection felt towards her by the whole family. See back, p. 102.

Whilst I was at Cambridge a most distressing accident occurred which I can never forget. Two young Trinity men went up the Cam in the higher part of it above the mill, in one of those dangerous canoes¹ which were then very commonly used. One of the young men was club-footed. The other foolishly stood up with his feet one on each edge, and made the canoe rock. The poor club-footed man implored his companion to desist, reminding him that he could not swim. Suddenly the canoe was upset and both the poor fellows disappeared. Some men on shore at once dived, but could not find the bodies for half an hour or more. At last they were found at the bottom of a hole, the club-footed man closely clinging to the other. Their bodies were carried to Trinity; and by a most affecting coincidence the father of one of them, who had just come from a distance to see his son, met the body at the gate of Trinity College.

My uncle was elected to a fellowship at Queens' College, January 16, 1829, which he held till 1834. He did not reside there after taking his degree. He went to London, where he was ordained deacon in 1828, and priest in 1829, and almost immediately began clerical work as curate at St. Mary le Strand. With regard to the then population, and the spiritual provision for them, the great London parishes were probably at their worst about this time. St. Mary le Strand was no exception. The rector had another parish, and seldom came near the place. Accordingly the whole work fell on the curate, with the result that in a year or two my uncle broke down under the strain, and suffered from an apparent return of his Indian fever and ague.² There were many hours a day of visiting and teaching in the parish, and, what was worse, there were continual burials in an awful little graveyard near Drury Lane. He seemed falling into a hopeless state under the mistaken treatment of the doctors, who would insist on bleeding and cupping him, when he fortunately resolved to consult Dr. Jephson of Leamington, who was then at the height of his reputation. This was

¹ If these were what we now call "canoes" they must have gone out and come in again at Cambridge. They were unknown in 1853, having only made their appearance a year or two after this date. My grandfather refers to them in 1782.

² The Vestry of St. Mary addressed a letter of thanks to him on his leaving (dated August 6, 1829), in which especial stress is laid on his "proposing and adopting the Visiting Society, for his temporal and spiritual works for the poor and needy, and for the establishment of an infant school."

the same doctor to whom my father considered that he owed so much himself ten years afterwards in his very dangerous illness. Jephson's treatment was of the most rigorous kind as regards obedience to his orders. He trusted very largely to strict diet. His patients had to live in a certain hotel of which he had control, stay there for some time, and obey his directions in the minutest particular. Any exhibition of disobedience ensured their dismissal. He entirely altered the treatment to which my uncle had been subjected, obliged him to take regular exercise in spite of lassitude and weakness, gave him strict rules of diet, and in a few months he was restored to his former health.

After this he accepted in 1830 the small living of Pinner by Harrow,¹—the patron being Mr. Cunningham, his old friend and father's curate,—where he went to live with his aunt and sister Emelia, who then composed the family; the two other surviving sisters being already married—Jane to Mr. J. Stephen, and Caroline to Rev. S. E. Batten. He must at this time have been really a strong man in spite of his occasional illnesses. For instance, he heard one day that Mr. Godfrey, then President of Queens' College, was dead. It immediately occurred to him that the Fellows might be induced to take his brother as successor (Henry Venn had then ceased to be a Fellow, having married and taken the living of Drypool, Hull). No time was to be lost, so he went to a neighbour—his squire, a Mr. Walkden, who was famed for his excellent horses—and asked him if he could give him a mount for Cambridge. He provided at once two good horses, one for John Venn and one for himself, and though it was already about two o'clock in the afternoon they set off. At Mr. Walkden's suggestion they occasionally changed horses for relief, and finished the journey of fifty miles or so before the College supper party had dispersed. Mr. Venn proceeded to open the matter to Joshua King, but saw at once that some other proposal had been already under discussion. It came out, in fact, that King was

¹ Pinner was a small hamlet in the parish of Harrow. The living was a perpetual curacy in the gift of the vicar.

thinking of the post for himself. Being a layman he was by statute ineligible, but in consequence of his great reputation it had been suggested by some of his friends in College that a Royal injunction might be procured to enable him to hold the office. This course was adopted, and as no one else could be put in competition with a man of King's renown, the visit to Cambridge proved abortive, and the two friends rode back next day to Pinner.

In reference to this Mr. Walkden, my uncle used to claim that he had had a humble part in aiding the making of the first trunk railway in England. The London and Birmingham line was planned to pass through Mr. Walkden's property, who came to ask my uncle's advice as to whether he should join most of the neighbouring squires in their opposition to it. Mr. Venn had often heard Farish argue in favour of railways, which, combined with his own strong interest in scientific schemes, induced him to urge the squire to do all he could to support the proposal.

Mr. Venn stayed about three years at Pinner. In 1833 Mr. Simeon offered him the vicarage of St. Peter's, Hereford, the advowson of which he had recently bought for his trust. Hereford was then such an out-of-the-way place that many people regarded it as lying in Wales. At most of the London coaching offices the people knew nothing about the means of getting there, till some one suggested that there was a conveyance called "the old fish cart," which went there through Worcester. It took, as it turned out, some thirty hours to effect the journey.

Hereford is the place with which my uncle's name will always be prominently associated, both from the length of his stay there, his marked personality, and the wonderful vigour and conscientiousness with which he threw himself into every kind of good work. As children we knew the place well, for we were often there, especially during our summer holidays. In fact for many years Hereford was a second home to us, and supplied in some respects what we could not readily secure at our own home. Neither Highgate nor Highbury were very congenial places as regards the making of friendships; and my mother's early death, and my father's absorbing work, prevented both the

retention of many old family acquaintances and the formation of new intimacies. But the long residence of my uncle and aunt at Hereford, and the universal love and respect entertained for them, had surrounded them with a circle of friends who at once extended their kindness and hospitality to their young relatives. Cricket was then very keenly practised at Hereford, and there happened to be a number of boys around with whom we used to play, and who supplied us with a higher standard of the game than we could find at our own school. There were continual rambles in the fields and lanes near by, boating excursions on the Wye, simple and friendly tea-parties at many a neighbouring house, and every now and then a picnic excursion to Fownhope, Dinedor, or one of the other beautiful hills which lay on every side of the town. Some of our amusements in our early days were of a kind which few parents would have tolerated in their own gardens. One in particular, I remember, consisted in borrowing an old Bath-chair from some kindly ladies who lived near by, mounting it in turn, and then driving each other furiously along the paths, with the object of upsetting it into the hedges.

My uncle's house stood on Aylestone Hill, just outside the city. It commanded a superb view : one which I have seldom seen equalled. In front was a foreground of sloping green fields, behind this the tower and spires of the cathedral and of the two principal churches rising from amidst the red bricks and tiles of the city houses ; then the broad fertile valley of the Wye ; and in the distance the magnificent range of the Black Mountains beyond the Welsh border. He had bought the house on his first arrival in Hereford. It was a mere cottage then, but it was added to from time to time, until it became a fair-sized and very convenient house.

His church, St. Peter's, was a fine old building, and held a large congregation. But it displayed during his time almost every blemish which church restorers denounce, together with a few peculiarities which must have been almost unique. It retained to the last pews with lofty sides and covered with green baize, galleries crowded under the

fine arches, the clerk's desk, the high reading desk, and the still higher pulpit, standing in the east end of the nave. But in one respect I should suppose that the "use" of St. Peter's, Hereford, had no parallel elsewhere. There was a beautiful and very large chancel. It was in fact so large and long that it was supposed that any one reading from the end of it would not be heard in the galleries. Accordingly this chancel had been at some time completely cut off from the body of the church by a large screen of carpentry and glass. The administration of the communion was of course held in the chancel, but the Epistles and Gospel were always delivered from the reading-desk. Another peculiar arrangement which my uncle found there he got rid of before long. It was a reproduction of the ingenious arrangement which Professor Farish had introduced into his church of St. Giles at Cambridge, and consisted of a paraboloidal sounding-board of which the preacher's head occupied the focus. This device sent a blast of sound down to the end of the church, but it also, according to the laws of acoustics, sent back to the preacher's ear every whisper uttered there. My uncle's predecessor had a weak voice, and had been so struck with Farish's ingenious apparatus that he persuaded his congregation to erect one of the same kind for him, at a cost of some £200. My uncle accordingly, when he entered the pulpit for the first time, found himself enclosed in a huge arrangement some six feet long which prevented him from seeing, or being heard by, nearly half the congregation. The thing was got rid of as soon as the susceptibilities of those who had provided it would allow.

In connection with this I may repeat that my uncle had an admirable voice, which he managed to a degree which I have never heard equalled. Even in his old age, when past eighty-two, it was a lesson in elocution to hear him read at family prayers. His powers in this way struck every one who heard him, and were equally displayed when only his old servants were present. This proficiency was largely due to the very careful instructions of Mr. Simeon. Referring to him soon after his appointment to Hereford Simeon says :—

I do not conceive that in general intonations I shall be able to add anything to him. It is in pauses, in which almost the chief excellence of reading consists, that I may yet help him a little more. I sadly regret that your sister cannot accompany him, because her exquisitely delicate ear caught every the slightest inflexion of my voice, and greatly emboldened me to make what a common ear would have judged hypercritical observations. And your dear brother most affectionately and with delight seized the hints so given and so attested and approved.—(Letter to Henry Venn, 1834.)

Besides his purely clerical work—and he was quite unwearied in visiting, and in the supervision of his schools—my uncle devoted much time and attention to a number of schemes for social and economical improvement. At an early stage of his career in Hereford he started the “St. Peter’s Literary Institution,” which was designed to provide a lending library, reading-room, and popular lectures. It did good work for many years until it was superseded by similar institutions on a larger scale.

The largest organisation with which he was concerned, and one which was due almost entirely to himself, was the Steam Corn-Mill and the many agencies which sprang from it. The following were the circumstances out of which it grew. On first going to the parish he was struck with the hardship inflicted upon the poor people who wanted their corn ground. (In the days before Free Trade and steam cultivation the gleaning of the corn left on the ground after the harvest was an important source of income to the poor; in fact a family looked to obtaining in this way a portion of their bread supply for the year.) The women used to take their bags of corn to the millers, but of course such small customers had to wait till other work was done. Often they had, he said, to go week after week for months, before they could get their flour back, and then it might be scant or adulterated. Casting about for a remedy he resolved to establish some grinding machinery which should be always and honestly at the service of the poor, but the proper motive power was a difficulty. At first he thought of utilising the treadmill labour, and actually applied to the magistrates for permission to employ this; but they declined, mainly on the ground that to make such labour *useful* was to destroy its

proper punitive character. At this time it was suggested to him by a Mr. Robinson, a Hereford man, who was, or had been, in the employment of Mr. Scott Russell, the great shipbuilder, that he had best start at once with a *steam* mill. Mr. Robinson had been concerned in the erection of some such mills himself, and he offered to construct one for Mr. Venn at cost price, which was done. Once at work such a mill rapidly outgrew its original design, the more so as the greater care in farming, after the introduction of Free Trade, considerably reduced the value to the poor of their gleaning. Accordingly the mill soon had to begin to work for the general public, and as this was one of the first steam corn-mills in the West of England, and rapidly acquired a reputation for prompt and fair dealing, it had as much thrown upon it as it could possibly get through. Such was the confidence reposed in the manager of it that the farmers would bring their corn in bulk, and leave it to him to weigh or measure it and give them flour at their next visit. The choice of this first manager was a queer one. He was a shoemaker, who had no knowledge whatever of either corn or machinery. He had been an active teacher and preacher—I presume in connection with some dissenting body—at a neighbouring village, where he went every Sunday for some twenty years without failing. This man, Thomas Day by name, at first helped in some humbler way at the mill, but soon showed such skill and zeal that he was made manager, an office which he retained for many years.

My uncle was of course largely helped at first both pecuniarily and otherwise. He started with a capital of some £3000, partly advanced by himself and relations, partly lent by some benevolent parishioners and others. The flour was also ordered by friends as an encouragement. I remember the occasional appearance at our home in Highgate, when a child, of the sack of "Hereford flour," and the excellent bread it made. One of his objects in this scheme was to encourage the poor to use the "whole meal," as being cheaper and wholesomer, but to the last he had to struggle in vain against the determination of almost all his customers to have only the very whitest of flour.

This corn-mill was only a part of his philanthropic scheme, though its pecuniary success made it the most important aid in carrying on the others. The beggary and thriftlessness of the poor struck him forcibly. Groups of women were in the habit of going round amongst the residents and almost extorting money from them. He therefore started the "Hereford Industrious Aid Society"—in this one of his various schemes being supported heartily by the Bishop of the diocese, Dr. Musgrave. Through this Society he did what he could to extend the Allotment System amongst the poor, but met the violent opposition from landowners and farmers which the earliest supporters of that scheme had to encounter. It was with the greatest difficulty for some time that the society could persuade any one to let them the land even at remunerative rents. Simultaneously with this, another scheme was started which was also—at least then and there, though "Charity Organisations" have since made it familiar—a novelty. It was the plan of advancing loans to the poor to start them in business or otherwise. He rigorously adopted from almost the first the plan of demanding security of the borrowers from people in their own rank of life, finding that then, and then only, would they be careful to repay. They thus lent in the aggregate a very large sum of money with an extremely small percentage of loss from bad debts.

Amongst minor modes of helping the poor he was always endeavouring to persuade them to adopt improved and more economical food, and better processes of cooking—he thus had for a time a breakfast prepared to which the working people were freely invited, to see if they would be persuaded to try Scotch oatmeal for their meals,—but this met with little or no success. As a small instance of providence on behalf of the poor it may be mentioned that in his early days at Hereford, before the making of the railway (or even of the temporary Gloucester canal), he noticed that the poor were sometimes put to terrible shifts to get coal in winter. He therefore hired a small yard, got in a supply of coal at a low rate in summer, and distributed it at cost price to the poor in the winter. This

plan was given up directly the improved means of transport altered the circumstances.

From the first the management of the mill was put into the hands of a Committee, of which he was only a member. As time went on it became a rather large concern, having extensive business dealings with some of the neighbouring counties. The proceeds, after paying interest to those who had originally lent him part of the capital, were rigorously devoted to the recognised aims of the "Industrious Aid Society." He held strongly that it was the duty of such a society, enjoying tolerably ample means of its own, not merely to follow the lead of others by aiding in generally admitted cases of want, but also to try experiments in economical procedure, which those who had to struggle for their livelihood could not in common prudence be expected to originate. The "experimental gardens," as managed by Mr. With,¹ were a very large development of the Industrious Aid Society. It was his aim that this garden should try every available plan, and then set a model, especially to the poor and small cultivators. The most economical kind of manure, the best plans for keeping pigs, fowls, etc., the most useful and nutritious crops, were all to be tried, and the results not merely thrown open to the people but urged upon their notice. In connection with this subject it may be added that he was one of the earliest supporters of Mr. Moule's system, introducing it wherever he had any power or influence.

This receptivity to new ideas was conspicuous to the last, and displayed itself at an age when very few people can be brought to realise the possibility of improvement in methods to which they have long been accustomed. I remember being with him when he was first informed that the old-fashioned millstones were being superseded by the new contrivance of crushing the grain between cylinders.

¹ Mr. G. With was for many years my uncle's chief assistant in the scientific part of his schemes. He was a good chemist, and was constantly at work analysing manures, with a view to determining what would be the most economical material for the use of the poor. What first brought him into notice was his extraordinary delicacy of hand and eye in the difficult art of grinding the concave glasses used for the mirrors of reflecting telescopes. For many years he had the making of all the glasses used by Browning the optician, the work being carried on in his own house with the simplest apparatus. This brought him under the notice of Dr. Dawes, Dean of Hereford, a well-known scientific man.

He was then about eighty, and every detail of his mill was naturally endeared to him by long use. He instantly, however, caught at the new idea, took the keenest interest in the method as described to him, and attended meetings of the Committee summoned to consider what should be done in order to meet the new demands.

His readiness to propose plans for the benefit of others was accompanied by an equal readiness to try new devices in his own case. This disposition sometimes caused amusement amongst his relations; and the sturdy common-sense of his aunt Jane, during her reign, and that of his sister Emelia afterwards, was put in action to control any wide departure from the practice of his neighbours. But for this kindly restraint he might very likely have gone in for dietetic experiments upon a rather mischievous scale. He once more or less seriously advocated the idea that we should do better by continually eating very small amounts instead of filling the stomach occasionally, and proposed, if he did not actually practise, the plan of nibbling grains of corn almost continuously. If this was a serious proposal it was almost the only case I can recall in which a desire for novelty was not kept within reasonable limits.

We used indeed to think him rather too prone to take up what seemed new fads in the way of remedies; for instance, the water cure and homœopathy. But he generally succeeded in carrying them out; and it must be admitted that, judging by experience, they mostly seemed to answer in his case.

It will be readily conjectured that he was an early and a strong advocate for total abstinence from alcohol. He commenced the practice at a time when it excited surprise even on the part of a clergyman. His difficulty at first was that he found that, without some kind of stimulant, he had a difficulty in digesting his food. A cup of tea at every meal was at last suggested, which he tried and found perfectly successful.

In his religious opinions he was, it need hardly be said, a decided and consistent evangelical of the old type; though speculatively somewhat more of a Calvinist than his brother. Young people are ready enough to detect,

or think they detect, inconsistencies between the opinions and the practice of their elders ; but I may repeat what has been already said of Henry Venn—and I think that all of my generation in the family will agree with me—that never, under any conditions of illness, anxiety, or disappointment, did I ever observe the slightest lapse in practice from the doctrines which he publicly professed.

My uncle had the old Protestant horror of Popery¹ more deeply and sincerely than any other really good man whom I have known, though he never fell into anything resembling vulgar abuse of it or of its adherents. The establishment of a Romish monastery at Belmont, on the Wye, near Hereford, was a very severe blow to him. He courageously tried to grapple with the evil by challenging a priest to a public controversy. This was a step which he intensely disliked ; for, though a good speaker, he had no experience whatever in debating, or in religious controversy. Moreover his refined sensitiveness shrank from such a public display. The Hereford priest himself declined the contest in favour of his brother—Canon Waterworth—who was somewhat of a professional combatant in such matters. The debate took place in 1847, being carried on in a public hall in the city. It was published under the title of the *Hereford Discussion*. Controversies of this kind were not very infrequent at the commencement of the Romish revival fifty or sixty years ago. They arose out of the old-fashioned Protestant view that the Papist had not a rational argument in his defence. This particular one was as indecisive as any such display must be when speculative doctrines, which theologians have fought over for centuries, are to be popularly decided on a platform in a few hours. The effect upon many of those who listened to it was probably the same which it produced upon my own mind when I read it as a youth. It raised a feeling of surprise and almost of dismay to find that the Romanist had a word to say in reply to Protestant objections. As against his individual opponent, my uncle put himself at considerable disadvantage by his studied fairness and courtesy through-

¹ So intense was his disapproval of whatever seemed to savour of Rome that he would probably have quitted the Church of England, shortly before the time of the Gorham judgment, but for the advice of his brother.

out, and especially by a needless depreciation, at the outset, of his own powers and attainments : an admission of which his opponent proceeded to make use in a tone almost of insolence.

His relations with his ecclesiastical superiors, though always those of courtesy and mutual respect, were not unfrequently somewhat strained. His first bishop during his incumbency at Hereford was Dr. Grey, son of the first Earl Grey, a prelate of the old-fashioned imposing and lordly type. With him the difficulty arose from my uncle proposing to say the words at the communion to each group of persons simultaneously ; the bishop insisted on their being repeated separately to each. It was urged against this that the service had lasted, on one occasion, from eleven to four, so great was the number of communicants. The bishop would hear of no departure from the rubric ; and when it was suggested that even his brethren adopted a similar course in the analogous case of confirmation he replied that *he* never did—as indeed he afterwards showed on one occasion, by repeating for hour after hour the words of benediction over each separate child at a large confirmation.

With Bishop Musgrave—a very different style of man—his relations were more sympathetic, though difficulties arose on one occasion from the bishop's extreme annoyance at his having invited Dr. M'Neile of Liverpool to take part in a religious meeting in the town. It was to Dr. Musgrave that my uncle owed the only little piece of church dignity which he ever possessed, viz. a prebend at the Cathedral, which he held from 1843 to 1868. His thorough knowledge of music, and his extreme delight in it, made the appointment very suitable, though of course he had no direct influence on the conduct of the service. His reason for resigning the office deserves notice. A few years after his appointment Dr. Hampden was appointed bishop. The election created much interest, owing to the strong opposition excited by the bishop's supposed unorthodoxy. Mr. Venn only realised at the last moment that, as one of the chapter, he would have to join in the ceremony of praying for guidance to select the man whom

the Crown imposed upon them. He had not the slightest objection to lay appointments, nor, I believe, any strong aversion to Dr. Hampden's views, as far as these were then known ; but he shrank, as he himself explained, from what seemed to him almost like blasphemy. Rather than take part in another election he resigned the office shortly before the next appointment.

His relations with the neighbouring Dissenters, whether ministers or laymen, were mostly very friendly ; and his earnest advocacy of the Bible Society¹ often brought him into co-operation with them at public meetings and in committee-rooms. At first, indeed, when he was somewhat stricter as a churchman than he afterwards became, he was inclined to resist their pretensions. At one time he had a sort of disputation with some leading Dissenter about Church government or principles, which led to some rather bitter attacks upon him by his opponent, in letters which appeared over his name in the local paper. The sequel to this was rather curious. Several years afterwards he happened to meet this man on the top of the coach, as he was travelling to Malvern. With his customary friendliness he entered at once into conversation with him, but found him adopt a very different tone from that of the former disputant. In fact he bitterly bewailed the tyranny of his own sect. As he expressed a wish to be ordained in the Episcopal Church, my uncle got him introduced to Dr. M'Ilvaine, Bishop of Ohio, U.S., who, after ordination, gave him a cure somewhere in his own diocese, where he lived for some years, and where he finally died.

In regard to personal characteristics, without ever in the least aiming at wit, or attempting to predominate in conversation, he had a remarkably playful and humorous manner of talk, and a power of narration which made him very attractive to young and old alike. As children he used to keep us in laughter by his stories and playful comments. Of personal tastes or accomplishments, that

¹ I remember once, as a youth, standing with him on the top of Penmœnmaur, and gazing on the Isle of Anglesey, lying spread out like a map beneath us. He suddenly broke out into an exclamation of admiration—not of the scenery, but of the people of that island. I was puzzled, until he proceeded to explain that in proportion to the population Anglesey contributed more largely to the Bible Society than any other county.

of music was perhaps the only one he possessed : nothing but his zeal for higher purposes prevented it, I think, from becoming a passion with him. He did not seem to have any keen love of nature—though he made more than one tour in Switzerland with my father in early days—beyond the liking for fine scenery, and exercise in the open air, which is almost universal amongst healthy people.

For poetry he seemed to have but little taste, and for fiction he naturally shared the strong antipathy felt by most of those amongst whom he had been brought up. I never knew him to open a novel, and never heard him mention any but one, *Clarissa Harlowe*;—the strange power of Richardson over our ancestors may puzzle the present younger generation, but it dominated on one occasion (see p. 101) even Henry Venn of Huddersfield. My uncle declared that this novel had lost him a place or two in the Tripos. He got hold of it some days before the degree examination, and could not lay it down. He said that in the morning, after reading nearly all night, his eyes were red with weeping.

On the intellectual side he seems to me a remarkable instance of a rare type of mind. He was one of those who, without the slightest pretence of scientific knowledge or study of scientific works, seem to possess an almost intuitive capacity of assimilating, by conversation and observation, every scientific suggestion which is able to help forward the practical schemes which they have at heart. He was the polar opposite of those who read everything that comes out, and apply nothing. Advocates of the old-fashioned Cambridge training would perhaps claim him in support of their views. He probably never looked at a book on mathematics or mechanics after leaving College, or indeed any regular treatise on scientific subjects, but he had absorbed much of the methods and principles, and he was constantly conversing with those engaged in very various kinds of scientific work, and seemed always able to extract some useful hint from their experience. It was the same in his social schemes. He had had nothing to do with Political Economy since he

attended the lectures of Malthus as a youth at Haileybury, but practical common-sense, and discussion with those who had had experience, soon led him to adopt many of the methods which modern "Charity organisers" would suggest for the management of allotments, and for Loan societies for the poor.

Calvinist as he was in doctrine, he never showed anything but the most cheery optimism in daily life, both as regards the world at large and individual men. I remember him once, when past eighty-two, on some one present disparaging modern times in comparison with the past, breaking out with the exclamation that "he hardly knew whether it rather made him laugh or feel indignant when he heard people say that the world was getting worse and not better." Utterly depraved as he held "man" to be, he had such trust in individual men that he was not infrequently taken in,¹ an occurrence which would probably have been more frequent but for the keen judgment and sagacity of his sister. "My dear, he is a most wonderful man" was now and then his confident opinion on some one who soon after failed him entirely. From time to time we had hints about various people who had not altogether fulfilled our good uncle's sanguine hopes, but he remained as enthusiastic to the last, always ready to believe the best of everybody and to help every one to the utmost of his powers.

It may have been the same disposition to accept new methods of practical utility which induced him so heartily to throw himself into various plans for helping on the spiritual progress of the Church. For instance, in the later fifties he paid one or two visits to Ireland for the purpose of observing the course of the religious Revival then in progress. He was so deeply interested in what he saw there that he travelled much about England, preaching on the subject and describing the spiritual movement.

¹ On one occasion it was a converted jockey, whom he accepted as a Scripture-reader. Unfortunately he also employed him to buy a horse for my father, whereon the old Adam was revived with disastrous results to us. I shall not forget my father's dismay when he arrived and found what had been purchased for him. He attempted to drive it home; but after the poor brute had dragged the phaeton as far, I think, as Ledbury, the effort was abandoned.

The rigour of his Calvinism seemed somewhat to give way, at least on one point, during his latter years. During most of his preaching time he never shrank from the most solemn warnings and denunciations of future woe to the unconverted. But a conversation with a niece seemed to show that his kindly heart had rather warped the logical stringency of his convictions. Discussing the work of Dr. Farrar on the non-eternity of punishment, he said in tones of the deepest feeling, "My dear, I wish with all my heart that I could believe every word he says. I can't now ; perhaps I shall some day."

Gentle, affectionate, and loving as he was, nothing would restrain him from doing or saying what he felt to be a duty. One Sunday morning, walking up Aylestone hill with a young nephew, he met a working-man carrying a fishing-rod, and apparently returning from Lugg Meadows. He was a stranger, but my uncle at once stopped him and spoke to him affectionately but most earnestly on the sin of breaking the Sabbath. In the same spirit he spoke and wrote strongly against some of the gaieties connected with the Three Choirs Festival, when held at Hereford. The fact that bishops and deans and all the great people of the three counties supported the festival mattered nothing.

He resigned St. Peter's Church in 1870, but continued to the last to take the keenest interest in his various industrial and social enterprises. He was continually visiting his experimental gardens, and discussing with the manager, Mr. With, how the results could be extended and improved.

He gradually failed in health, and died at his house in Hereford, May 12, 1890, having just completed his eighty-eighth year. He was buried in the old graveyard of St. Peter's, by the side of his sister and aunt, on May 17.

It is foreign to the purpose of these Family Annals to enter into the deeper spiritual experience of those described in it. But it may be said that to him everything that he tried to effect for the minds and bodies of those for whom he worked so strenuously was as nothing to what he strove to effect for their souls.

DEPARTMENTS OF THE HEREFORD SOCIETY FOR AIDING THE
INDUSTRIOUS, ESTABLISHED BY THE REV. JOHN VENN,
MARCH 1841.

1. A Steam Corn-Mill, to enable the working classes to get their corn ground at small cost, the other millers charging very high prices for so doing.
2. A Soup-Kitchen, to supply during the winter season a nourishing soup at 1d. a quart. In severe seasons as much as 52,500 quarts were sold.
3. An arrangement for supplying the poor with coal during the winter at a moderate price, from 6d. to 9d. per cwt., delivered at their homes.
4. A Loan Department, to lend money to the poor at a very moderate rate of interest. By the end of the year 1848 the sum of £18,000 had been lent to poor people.
5. In order to assist the industrious poor, allotments of land for vegetable culture were let in various parts of Hereford and suburbs. About fifty-two acres were divided into allotments.
6. In 1876 Mr. G. With, Master of the Hereford Blue Coat School, was engaged as agricultural chemist, and the various manures Mr. With invented have proved a great boon to all engaged in the various departments of agriculture.
7. Another most useful department of the Society was established for lending on hire, at a very reasonable rate, various articles required by invalids.
8. A Provident Depositors' Department was opened. Any sums, however small, were allowed to be deposited, as in a Savings Bank.
9. A Tea and Coffee Shop was opened in connection with the Soup-Kitchen.

The Hereford Public Swimming and Washing Baths were erected in 1870 under the direction and superintendence of the Committee of which Mr. Venn was Chairman, and they were among the first large swimming baths erected in the country where all classes of boys and girls could learn to swim.

The Hereford Society for Aiding the Industrious, as it now exists, is the outcome of the Steam Corn-Mill established by Mr. Venn, although entirely reconstructed and now licensed by the Board of Trade. During the last ten years the above society has

aided, by grants from £10 to £500, nearly all the churches, chapels, and charitable institutions of the city and neighbourhood, more especially having regard to those institutions which more particularly benefit the working and industrious classes. Among others we may mention :—

The Hereford Free Library.
Voluntary Elementary Schools.
Hereford City Mission.
Herefordshire General Hospital.
Hereford Working Boys' Home.
The Venn Incurable Fund.
Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution.
Hereford Servants' Home.
The Venn Memorial Fund.
Hereford Nursing Association.
Young Women's Christian Association.
Young Men's Christian Association.
City and County Mission.
Society for the Rescue and Protection of Young Women.

(Drawn up by Mr. Wm. G. Lloyd, Secretary of the Hereford Society for Aiding the Industrious, May 13, 1901.)

APPENDIX

I. ARMS OF FENN AND VENN

THE Arms habitually and independently used for many years, both by my own family and by the Venns of Peyhembury, were, as already stated, "Argent, on a fess azure three escallops of the first, within a bordure engrailed of the second. Crest, a dragon's head erased argent, about his neck a collar azure charged with three escallops of the first." My great-grandfather, Henry Venn, used a seal for his letters, engraved with this coat, certainly from 1756; and his son John (who from boyhood was very keen on the subject of Heraldry) tells us that his grandfather Richard, the rector of St. Antholin's, had always used the same coat. This would carry its use back to 1710 or 1720 probably. As to the Peyhembury family, the earliest reference I have found is in a letter from the Rev. E. Coleridge, vicar of St. Mary Ottery, written in 1814, in which he says, "I was shown yesterday, by Mr. John Venn, the family arms painted and enclosed in a small frame: besides he possessed an old silver seal [afterwards shown to my father in 1823], handed down from father to son, with the family arms." I may repeat here that as neither of these families had any knowledge of the existence of the other—at any rate during most of the eighteenth century—this common use of the same coat suggests the probability of an earlier common tradition, dating from the time before they dispersed.

As to the origin and history of this coat of Arms, so far as those persons are concerned who had an unquestionable right to its use, the pedigree on page 214 should be consulted. It is taken from one in Anthony Norris's collection, now in the possession of Mr. Walter Rye, but the Heralds' Visitations on which it is mainly founded are indicated, and with these I have carefully compared it.

This pedigree, it will be seen, starts with a Hugh Fenne who was killed about 1390, and who is assigned to Yorkshire.¹ As far as I

¹ This is not at variance with what was suggested as to the etymology of the name. Besides the two main fen districts in the east and west of England there was a third such area in the south of Yorkshire, around what used to be called the Isle of Axholme.

know there is now no living descendant in the male line of any one here included. The family, it will be seen, quitted Yorkshire immediately, and dispersed into various parts of England. One branch settled in Gloucestershire,¹ where they lived, as flourishing clothiers, for several generations. The best known member of this branch was Sir Richard Fenn or Venn, Lord Mayor of London in 1638. He was a son of Hugh Fenn of Wotton under Edge. Another branch was in business in London, where a John Fenn appears as "Captain of the City of London, *temp.* James I." A third branch was resident for several successive generations in Norfolk, and appears in the Visitation of that county in 1664. Far the best known member of this last branch was Sir John Fenn the antiquary, celebrated by his discovery and publication of the *Paston Letters*. He died without issue in 1794, the last of his stock, and I have found no evidence of the present existence of any one of the name descended from the branches above named.

It may be pointed out that this long pedigree entirely confirms what I have said as to the change of F to V in the spelling of the name. Every person included in it remains a "Fenn," with the exception of the descendants of Robert, who settled at Wotton in Gloucestershire. This spot is very near the limit drawn by the philologists between the harder and softer dialectic forms, and we accordingly find Robert's descendants described as *Venn*. His son Hugh, for instance, who died in 1611, and whose will was proved at Gloucester, appears simply as Venn. So does Hugh's son William, who died in 1617, and other members of the same family. The Lord Mayor himself indeed is commonly styled Sir Richard Fenn, but in all the references to him in the wills of his Gloucestershire relatives he appears as Venn.

Sir Richard left (according to Hutchins²) a daughter, Jane, who married John Tregonwell, Esq. of Milton Abbas, Dorset. In the first edition of the *History of Dorset*, in his description of the house at Milton Abbas, it is stated that the Fenn Arms, as above described, were still to be seen in the great hall there, both singly and

¹ I take it for granted that the Heralds satisfied themselves that these particular Gloucestershire Fenns or Venns were really descended from the Yorkshire stock, as shown in the pedigree. Otherwise I should have assumed the Wotton family to be one of those which seem to be autochthonous in the county. Several of these are to be found, from an early date (*e.g.* wills of 1545), in the near neighbourhood of Gloucester, not more than fifteen miles from Wotton. However, even if the identification were erroneous, Sir Richard Fenn had the sanction of the College for the Arms which he used. As to the descent of Sir John Fenn I do not suppose there can be any doubt.

² There must be some mistake here. In the first place, by what must be an oversight, Hutchins calls the Lord Mayor *Robert* Fenn. Again, in the wills of both Sir Richard Fenn and his widow, which are unusually full in their reference to relatives, no daughter Jane is mentioned, and there seem to have been two sons living, with issue. That John Tregonwell married a Jane Fenn of this family is doubtless true, but it is not easy to assign her place in the pedigree. Hutchins is so explicit as to her being a daughter of the Lord Mayor that the likeliest supposition seems to be that she was a daughter of his first wife, but it is strange that he should not mention her in his will.

impaled with Tregonwell ; also in the church, on Tregonwell monuments, arranged quarterly. From the last edition of Hutchins (1870), I gather that all traces of these arms have been removed from the house.

The next person, or rather family, to use this coat of Arms, as far as I can ascertain, was John Venn, the regicide, the well-known M.P. in the Long Parliament and at one time Governor of Windsor Castle. He seems to have had no connection with the above-named stock, but came of a family of yeomen who had been very long settled at Lydeard near Taunton. Their names do not appear in any Visitation of Somerset. There was a Visitation for instance in 1623, when John Venn's elder brother Simon was living, but there is no reference to the family, though the Heralds visited the immediate neighbourhood and indeed recorded the pedigree of one gentleman from the parish of Lydeard.

John Venn first appears in the London Visitation of 1636, when a brief pedigree, commencing with his father, is entered. He then seems to have claimed the arms mentioned above, but their use was not definitely authorised, as there is an entry attached that they were "respited until his return from Devonshire." Similarly with his son Thomas, the royalist mayor of Bridgewater. The pedigree is entered in 1672, but the coat of Arms does not seem to have been authorised. In fact, according to the best information I can obtain, this coat was never definitely allowed to any of the Venns of Lydeard.

As a matter of fact, however, with or without due license, John Venn and his family continued to use this coat. As to his seal, attached to the Warrant¹ for the King's execution, we can say nothing, as the impression is too imperfect to be legible. But it occurs several times on the tombstones of members of his family at Lydeard St. Lawrence. The earliest of these stones (with armorial bearings) is that to the memory of Simon Venn, cousin of the regicide, who died in 1683, at the age of ninety-one. There is another to John Venn, the master of Balliol, who was a son of the above Simon. In both of these cases the same arms are assigned, with the crescent for difference. The widow, also, of the master of Balliol left, by will, an escutcheon to be placed in the College Hall, with his and her arms (Venn or Fenn, impaling Lowe). It had been placed outside the College, after his death, in accordance with academic custom.

How the regicide and his family came to select this coat we cannot say for certain, but it seems to me most likely that he took it for granted that he had a right to use the arms of his London namesakes. He must have known Sir Richard, the Lord Mayor, for they were contemporaries, active in the City, fellow-

¹ This Warrant is preserved in the Library of the House of Lords.

officers in the Artillery Company, and both engaged extensively in the cloth trade. Moreover, these arms are recorded in such a popular work as the *Display of Heraldry* of Guillim, who says, "The field is, argent on a fess azure three escallop shells of the first, a bordure engrailed of the second. In chief a crescent gules for a difference of a second brother. This is the coat armour of that worthy gentleman John Fenn, one of the Captains of the City of London." This account appears in the edition of 1632, and is repeated in subsequent editions. As will be seen in the Fenn pedigree, this "captain" was a second cousin of the Lord Mayor, and must almost certainly have been an acquaintance of his fellow-captain¹ the subsequent regicide.

What confirms this view is that the regicide and his family, as will be seen, followed the two other London citizens in adopting the "crescent for difference," the distinctive indication of a second son. This characteristic, true of the latter, could hardly be properly applied to the former. If the Lydeard people really belonged to the same family they would seem to have been in all likelihood an elder branch, for, as we have seen, they were of very old standing as yeomen in that parish. In fact they can be traced there from a period considerably anterior to the Hugh Fenn who heads the armigerous family. My own conviction in fact is that the regicide simply took it for granted, as is, and already then was, common enough, that the arms belonged to the *name* rather than to the descendants of some assigned individual or family, and that he therefore had a right to their use.

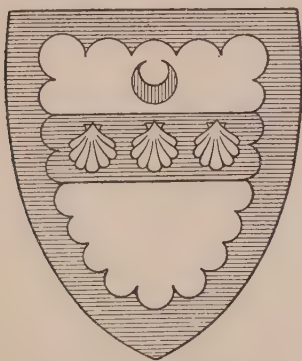
As to the use of the same coat by my own forefathers and the Peyhembury yeomen, I have already said something. It seems to me very unlikely that at that date (150 to 180 years ago), and in their position socially, they should have both started, and started independently, the use of the same armorial bearings. But if, on the other hand, as is confirmed by a certain amount of supplementary evidence, they were really of the same stock as the Lydeard people, it would be likely enough that they should continue to use, on seals, etc., the arms which had been claimed and actually used by the latter since 1636. In saying this I must repeat what has been said above, namely, that this usage is only mentioned as corroborative evidence of family affinity. None of the families either in Somerset or Devon can show any technical right to the particular arms in question. They do not appear in the Visitations of those counties, nor was their right acknowledged by the Heralds' College.

It is, of course, impossible to prove a negative in the matter

¹ It need hardly be said that Guillim cannot be referring here to the regicide, who, though he might have been a "worthy gentleman" in 1632, could not possibly have been so called after the Restoration, by any one at the Heralds' College.

of a long pedigree, but I am inclined to believe that John Fenn the antiquary, who died in 1794, was the last person strictly entitled to use these arms; unless, indeed, there be survivors from those who lived in and about Wotton under Edge in Gloucestershire.

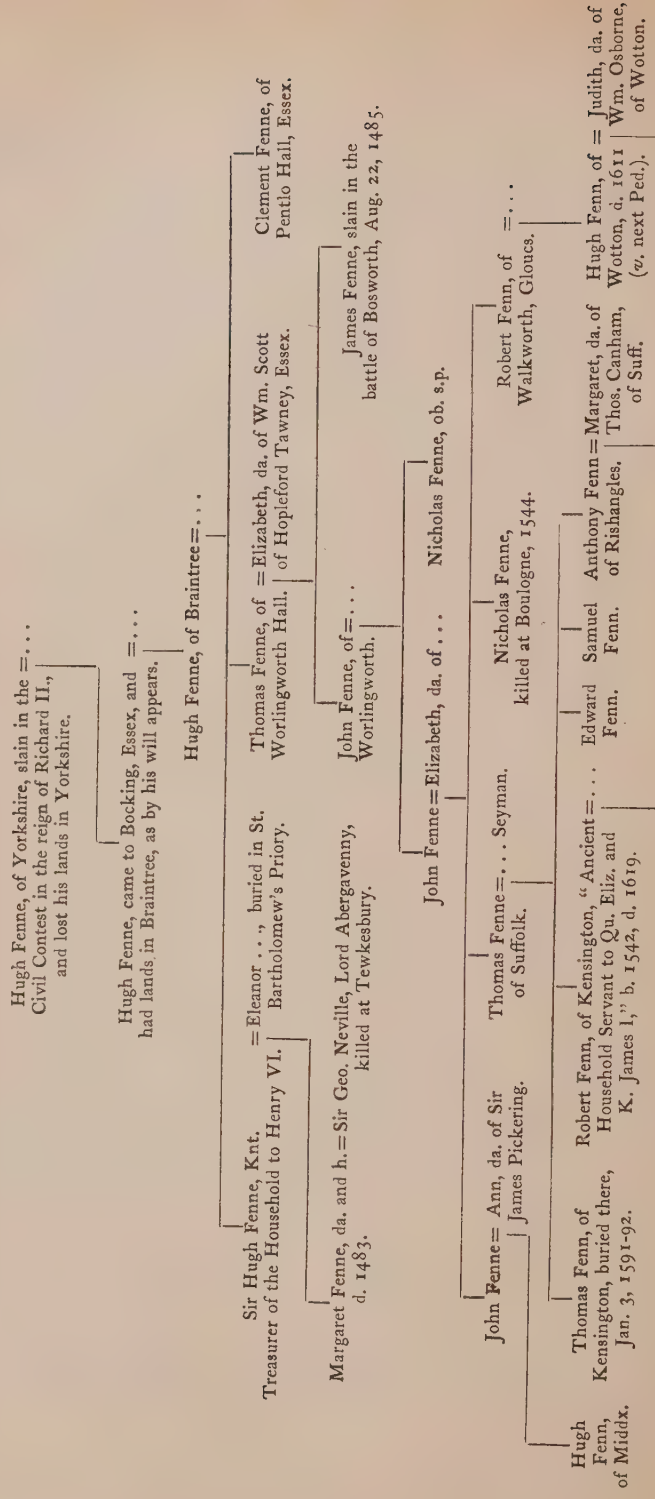
In the year 1814 my granduncle Edward Venn of Ipswich, dissatisfied with the uncertainty in which he stood, obtained a new grant. In accordance with the custom of the College of Arms, the coat hitherto used by his father and grandfather, never having been officially sanctioned, was not now allowed, though one does not see why something was not assigned which should have been more nearly in agreement with the device they had used for nearly a century. The only point of agreement consists in the three escallops. What was then granted is thus described: "Erminois, on a bend gules, between six fleur-de-lis azure three escallops argent. And for crest on a wreath of the colours on a Mount Vert a lion passant erminois, the dexter paw resting on an escocheon azure charged with a fleur-de-lis or." In this grant one rather unusual condition must be noticed. Instead of being granted to one assigned living person and his heirs male, it is practically antedated and granted to Edward's grandfather, Richard Venn, who died in 1739; for his living descendants who then bore the name are expressly mentioned. That is, besides "the memorialist" Edward, "Henry Venn, John Venn, Catherine Venn, Jane Venn, and Caroline Venn, children of the memorialist's cousin german John Venn," are entitled to bear the arms "with due and proper differences according to the laws of Arms." This included every living descendant of Richard Venn except the issue of his married daughter Mrs. Gambier, and Emelia, omitted by mistake.

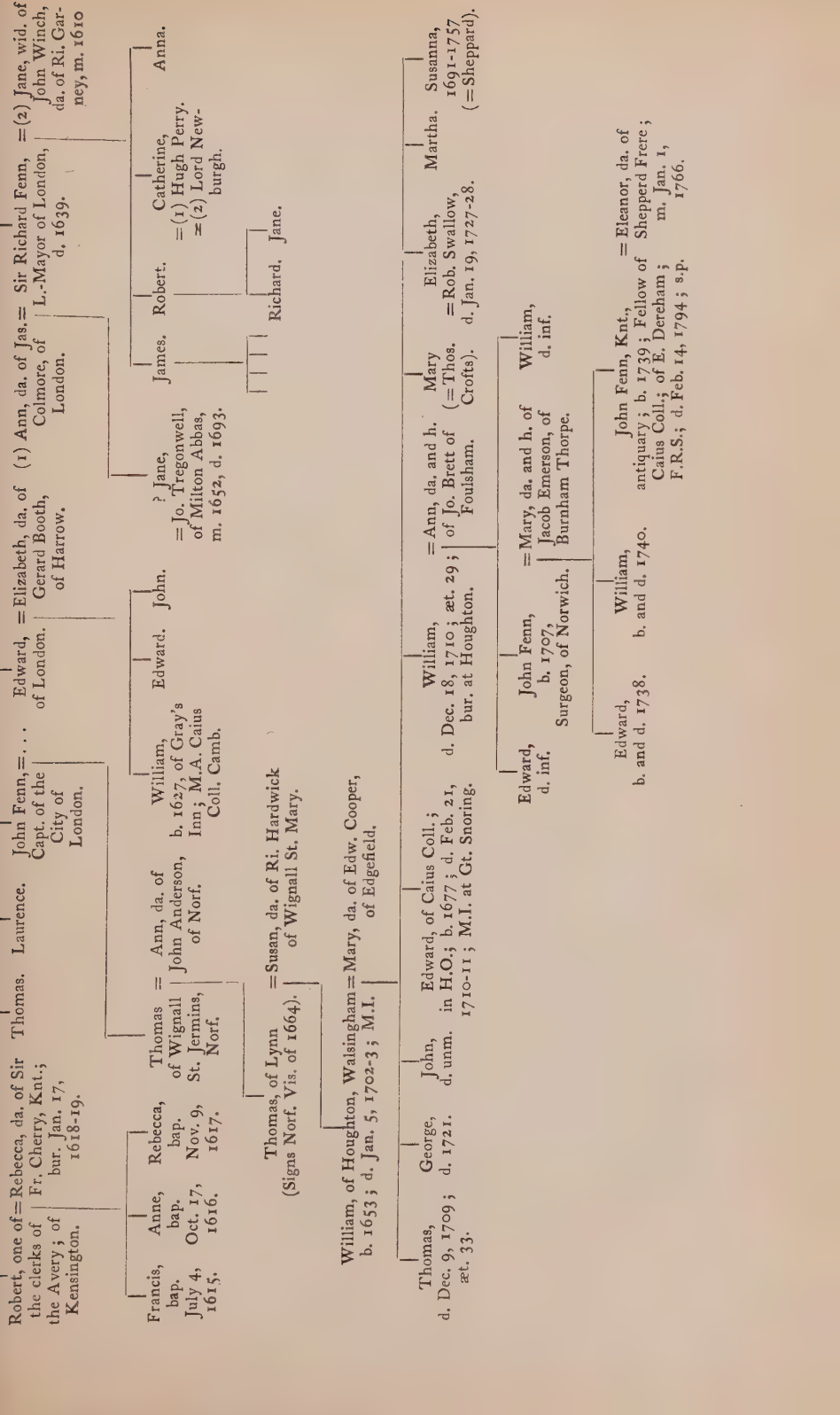


ARMS OF FENN, FROM GUILLIM.

ARMS GRANTED TO DESCENDANTS
OF RICHARD VENN, 1814.

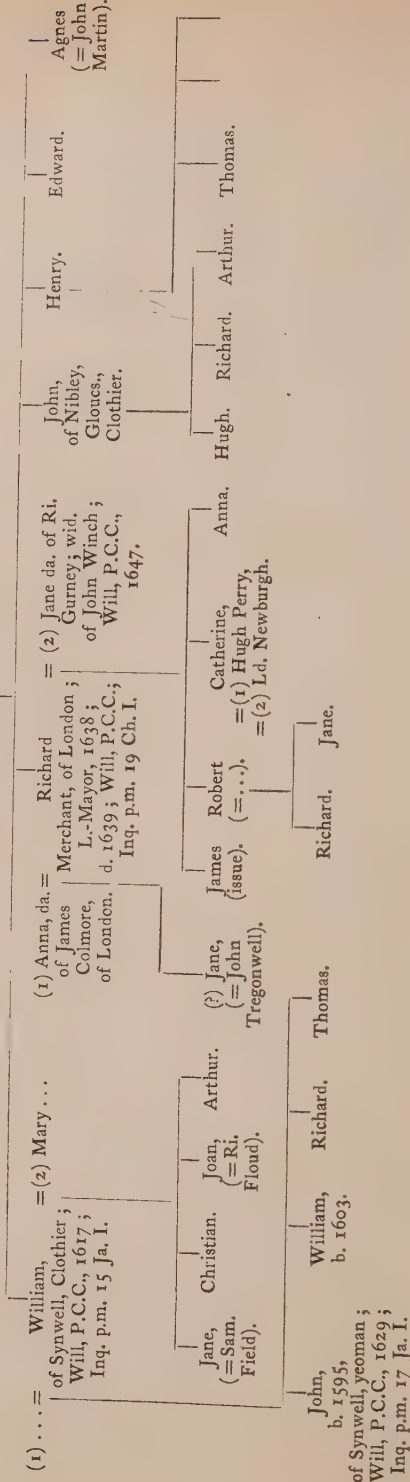
FENN FAMILY.—From Anthony Norris, Herald's College (I. 9, 89; 6 D. 14; Vincent, 119, p. 463), etc.





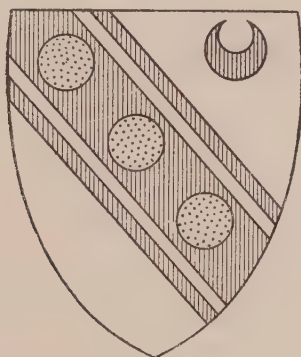
FENN OR VENN, OF WOTTON UNDER EDGE (Compiled from Wills, etc.).

Hugh Fenn or Venn, = Judith, da. of
of Synwell, Wotton ; Wm. Osborne,
Will, P.C.C., 1611 ;
Inq. p.m. 8 Ja. I.



II. BISHOP FAMILY OF LINCOLN

The Bishops were for several generations an important commercial family in Lincoln, two or three of them successively holding the office of Mayor of that city. As in so many cases where younger sons entered into business in London or other large towns, the family seems to have originated from good local stock in the county. My great-grandfather, who married Eling Bishop and left a brief memorial notice of her for his children,



ARMS OF BISHOP OF HEMSWELL

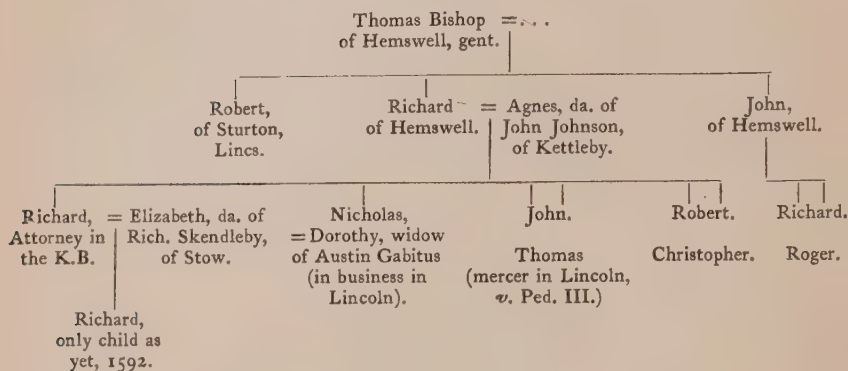
Argent, on a bend cotised gules, 3 plates : a crescent for difference (Vis. 1592).

states that they belonged to the same stock as the (now extinct) baronet family of Sussex. Henry Venn himself did not care for such considerations, and showed no interest whatever in questions of genealogy ; and considering how remote Lincoln is from Sussex, I supposed at first that he was probably mistaken. But I now think that there is no doubt that they really did belong to the "Bishops of Hemswell," who appear in the Visitations of the County of Lincoln in 1592 and 1634. In the latter of these visitations it is expressly stated that the Bishops of Hemswell were a junior branch of those of Sussex. Thomas Bishop, Eling's father, was buried at St. Mary-le-Tower, Ipswich, of which church he was for several years the incumbent. The Hemswell family arms, "Argent, on a bend cotised gules, three plates ; a crescent for difference," are displayed on his monument there. The exact place of Thomas, the first known of those who settled in the city of Lincoln, in the Hemswell pedigree, is not quite certain ; but it is probable that he was the fourth son of Richard.

Of the three following pedigrees, the first two are taken

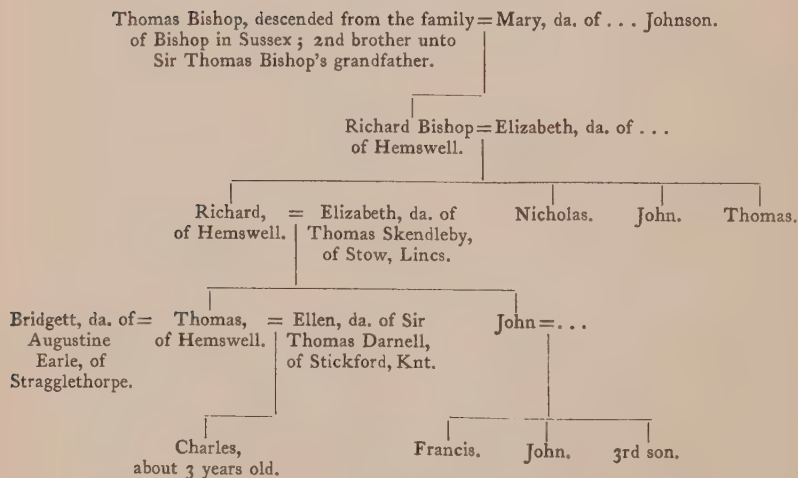
BISHOP PEDIGREE I.

Visitation of Lincs., 1592.



BISHOP PEDIGREE II.

Visitation of 1634.



(As will be seen, there are some discrepancies between these two accounts.)

BISHOP PEDIGREE III.

Thomas Bishop,
m. June 12, 1598;
Sheriff of Lincoln, 1614;
bur. Sep. 4, 1619.

= Elinor, da. of
Thomas Langworth.

Marg.,
b. 1599.

Elizth.,
1601-11.

Wm.,
bap. Sep. 25, 1602;
Mayor of Lincoln, 1639.

Mary,
b. 1607.

Anna,
b. 1605.

Elinor,
b. 1608.

Thos.,
1612-36, of
St. John's Coll.,
Camb.; in H.O.

Steven,
b. 1614,
d. 1614.

Elizth.,
b. 1617.

(1) . . . (2) Ann, =
d. Oct. 25,
1677.

Thomas,
b. 1632; d. March 26,
1682; Mayor of
Lincoln, 1669; J.P.

= (3) Martha, da. of
Maccabeus Hollis;
m. Ap. 23, 1678;
d. 1728.

Sarah,
b. 1632.

Mary,
b. 1635
(= Enoch Malton).

Elizabeth
(= Fawkes).

Hannah
(= Kelsey).

William,
b. 1664.

Thomas
of Sid. Suss. Coll.; D.D.; Vicar of
St. Mary-le-Tower, Ipswich; bap.
Aug. 19, 1681; d. June 29, 1737.

Elizabeth, da. of
John Fowle, M.A.;
d. June 3, 1749.

Mary,
bap. May 20, 1679.

John,
b. 1716,
d. 1716.

Eling,
b. 1714,
d. 1714.

Thos.,
b. 1713,
d. 1778
(= E. Carew).

Martha,
b. 1710,
d. 1710.

Elizabeth,
(= Rev. S. King).

Thomas,
b. 1760, d. 1760.

Wm.,
b. 1718,
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(This account is compiled from wills, parish registers, and family notes.)

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John,
b.

from the Visitations of 1592 and 1634 ; the third I have compiled from parish registers, wills, etc.

The earliest of the family in the city of Lincoln who can, so far, be certainly identified is Thomas, whom I suppose to be the fourth son of Richard Bishop and Agnes Johnson, of Pedigree I. He belonged to the parish of St. Peter at Arches, where he married, June 12, 1598, Elinor, daughter of Thomas Langworth. He was doubtless by trade, like his successors, a mercer, and the same as the Thomas Bishop who was Sheriff of the city in 1614. He had nine children, whose baptisms are recorded in St. Peter's register. Of these Thomas went to St. John's, Cambridge, where he graduated B.A. in 1631. He was in Holy Orders, and died young and unmarried, his will being proved at Lincoln in 1636.

His eldest son William succeeded him in his business, and was a man of some note in the city. He was Sheriff in 1631, and Mayor in 1639. During the Civil War he was on the side of the King, and was forced to compound for his estate. His case is thus described in the *Royalist Composition Papers*. "William Bishop, mercer, City of Lincoln. His delinquency that he was in arms against the Parliament, and that he did help the Earl of Newcastle to defend the city against the Parliament." He admits that he "did unfortunately, to save his estate, join with the said forces in defence of the city." He owned property in Lincoln, and sixty-three acres of land, with cottages, in Brantbroughton ; all his other personal estate being "taken from him by the rage and fury of these unhappy times." He took the National Covenant before the Committee, April 11, 1646 ; being fined £34. In a petition which he addressed to the King after the Restoration he asserts that he "did, in the years 1642 and 1643, aid and defend his Blessed Majesty to the utmost of his power," and prays that he may be restored to the post of Alderman, from which he had been expelled by the Corporation. What was the result of the petition is not stated, nor have I succeeded in finding his will, or the record of his burial.

He had a son, Thomas, and four daughters, Sarah, Mary, Elizabeth and Hannah. Thomas was a mercer, and Alderman of the city. He was born in the month of May 1630. He was married three times. By his first wife, or her successor, he had a son William, born in 1664. In or about 1678 he married Martha, daughter of Maccabeus Hollis of Hull.¹ By her he had a son

¹ Maccabeus Hollis was an Alderman and merchant of Hull, where he was baptized (at Trinity Church), March 21, 1603-4. His father's name was Robert. He married, August 11, 1633, at Thornton by Pickering, Mary, daughter of Robert Hunter, Esq. He held the office of Chamberlain of Hull in 1639. Politically, he was on the Parliamentary side. He was one of the Committee of Defence in 1643, and in command of troops in the garrison after the seizure of Sir John Hotham. In Tickell's *History of Hull* there is an account of his examination and evidence in the matter of the arrest and supercession of Hotham. In 1650 he received £2000, by warrants of the



THOMAS BISHOP, D.D.

Thomas, and a daughter Mary. He died March 26, 1682; and is described in the burial register of St. Mark's as "alderman, and one of the King's Majesties justices of peace, and by trade a mercer." His will was proved at Lincoln.

Thomas Bishop was born in the parish of St. Mark's, where he was baptized August 19, 1681. He was admitted at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1696, whence, after three years' residence, he migrated to Sidney. He graduated B.A. 1700-1; M.A. 1704; and D.D. in 1725. His Act for this last degree is said to have attracted considerable attention. The occasion was otherwise distinguished by the fact that no less than seven Doctors in Divinity were created at the same time. Dr. Bentley, the famous master of Trinity, who presided on this occasion, as Regius Professor of Divinity, published his own speech as a preface to his edition of *Terence*. Mr. Bishop was ordained priest by the Bishop of Norwich, September 22, 1706. His title was apparently the Rectory of Creeting All Saints, Suffolk, to which he had been presented by Orlando Bridgman. He soon added other preferments, becoming minister of St. Mary-le-Tower, Ipswich, in 1707; Rector of Creeting St. Olaves in 1711; and Rector of Gosbeck, Suffolk, in 1720. He held these till his death.

He was an able and learned man, and his reputation as a preacher was shown by his appointment, in 1724 and 1725, to deliver the lectures founded by Lady Moyer at St. Paul's Cathedral. He was also distinguished by his remarkable memory. It is recorded of him (*Gent. Mag.* 1797, ii. 618) that once having walked from Temple Bar to St. Paul's he was able to recall and describe all the signs in order, which then hung over almost every shop (this notice is doubtless by his grandson, John Venn). He was fond of company, but so lavish and profuse in his expenditure that the family were left in decided poverty after his death. He married Elizabeth, daughter of John Fowle,¹ Rector of Creeting St. Peter, by whom he had twelve children. He died June 29, 1737, and was buried in the church of St. Mary-le-Tower, where there is a monument to the memory of his wife and himself. His will was proved at Norwich. There is a miniature likeness of him, in clerical costume, in my possession.

Council of State, for the fortifications of the town. His will was proved (P.C.C.) in 1652. His eldest son, Robert, became Recorder of Hull. As to the Hunters of Pickering, their pedigree is given in the Yorkshire Visitations of 1612 and 1664.

¹ John Fowle, M.A., Rector of Creeting St. Peter, Suffolk, 1672-1724. He was of Caius College. He married, as his second wife, Elizabeth, daughter of Nathaniel Keble, gent., of Creeting All Saints, by whom he had one daughter, Elizabeth. He died in 1724. His father, Thomas, was Rector of Monewden, and died in 1663. He was probably somewhat of a Puritan, as he was instituted by the Parliament in 1647, and did not receive Episcopal ordination until after the Restoration, August 20, 1662.

Of his large family, six died in infancy, and some others young or unmarried. The following may be mentioned :—

1. Thomas, in Holy Orders, M.A. of Magdalene College, Cambridge. He succeeded his father at St. Mary-le-Tower in 1737, having been elected minister by the parishioners. He also held the rectory of Trimley. He married a Miss Carew. He died in Ipswich, and was buried, January 5, 1778, at St. Mary-le-Tower. He left one daughter, Elizabeth, who married the Rev. Samuel King, Head-Master of Ipswich Grammar School, and rector of Witnesham. They had a family of eight children.

2. Mary, married Mr. Brasier, who was in business near Ipswich. The last male issue of this marriage was the late John Henry Brasier, barrister, of Lincoln's Inn, who died in 1894.

3. Eling, who married Henry Venn, and of whom an account has already been given.

III. JOHN VENN, THE REGICIDE

John Venn was second son of Simon Venn, of Lydeard St. Lawrence, Somerset, where he was baptised, April 8, 1586. He sprang from an old yeoman stock which may be traced back, in that parish or the adjacent one of Bishop's Lydeard, to about the beginning of the fourteenth century. He was apprenticed in the Merchant Taylor's Company, June 8, 1602, and admitted to the freedom of the Company, August 27, 1610. He served as warden of his company in 1640-41, but was excused the mastership in 1648, being then in Parliament. He belonged to the Honourable Artillery Company, becoming "captain serjeant-major" in 1636, whence his early title of Captain Venn. He seems always to have been a substantial citizen of London, in spite of the Royalist statements to the contrary. He was one of the original members of the Massachusetts Bay Company, enumerated in the Royal Charter of March 4, 1628-29; attended their meetings regularly whilst these were held in England, and is mentioned as a stock-holder in 1644 (*Records of Massachusetts*, vol. i. Boston, 1853). According to Hutchinson, in his *History* of that colony, Venn had at one time intended going to America. His main business in London was that of the silk and wool trade with the west of England and with Ireland. He was one of the merchants who made a petition of complaint that their visits to the fairs of Exeter and Bristol were forbidden by the local magistrates from fear of the plague (*Cal. of State Papers*, May 1, 1637). He was a member of the Long Parliament, having been elected for the city of London in 1640, and began at once to take a prominent part on the side of the Parliament. He was accused, on December 2, 1641, of fomenting the gathering of armed citizens in the neighbourhood of the House of Commons, by saying in a shop in Cheapside, "You must go to the Parliament with your swords, for that party which is best for the Commonwealth is like to be over-voted." His defence is given in a brief pamphlet entitled "A speech made by Captain Venn to the apprentices of London who rose in Cheapside, upon the Combustion at Westminster . . . December 29, 1641." He was one of six members who, together with those charged with treason, were excepted from the King's pardon on June 17, 1642. He shortly after appears as Colonel of Foot in the Parliamentary Army, and took part in the fight by Worcester on September 23, 1642. In an account in a letter in the *State Papers* he is said to have been in command of a party of horse there, employed in guarding the passages of the Severn. He was sent on October 28, 1642, to take possession of Windsor Castle, where he remained as governor till June 1645. In this

capacity he showed himself harsh and fanatical. He plundered the chapel of St. George, destroyed the furniture and decorations of the choir, and expelled the canons.

"Now as the members do lord it at Westminster so did Master Venn in his castle at Windsor, where, if you chance to die, there is no Christian burial. For Colonel Shelley (who, for his loyalty to his Majesty in the business of Chichester, had been prisoner there by a twelve-month) desired Venn to allow Christian burial to a gentleman that died there, to whom Venn returned this very answer here inserted from the original under Venn's own hand.

"Sir, you know I am not willing to deny you anything reasonable; but what you mean by Christian burial I understand not. Sure I am it is Christian burial to have Christians to accompany the corpse to the earth, and not to have prayers said over the dead. I am sure this is Papistical burial; and to have this done I denied it to a captain's wife lately buried, and to all of our side; yea, and in the town also, for it is against the covenant we have taken, and therefore I must crave excuse. Only this I shall afford you, that I do afford to ourselves. You shall have your request in this, that some of your officers shall carry him to the grave, if ye do it in the day-time.—John Venn."

"Is not this a champion for the Protestant religion, who hath the face to give it us under his hand that Christian burial according to the doctrine of the Church of England is expressly against their covenant? But Mistress Venn affirms it, and we are bound to believe her, who, good lady, professed to her husband 'she could not sleep or take any rest in any part of Windsor Castle but only in the Queen's lodging'" (*Mercurius Aulicus*, December 17, 1643; quoted in Malcolm's *Anecdotes of London*, vi. 141).

In his military capacity he was vigorous and successful. Whilst in command at Windsor he repelled, November 7, 1642, a sharp attack by Prince Rupert, who had succeeded for a time in obtaining mastery of the town. "Colonel Venn behaved himself very bravely, to the wonder and amazement of the beholders" (from "A most famous victory obtained by that valiant religious gentleman, Colonel Venn, against Prince Robert [sic]," 1642). Another contemporary account says, "Colonel Venn's dragooners have done of late very good service. His name is grown so terrible to the cavaliers that for fear of him they have taken up the bridge at Staines" ("A true report of two merchants of London who were taken prisoners by the cavaliers," 1642).

By the 3rd April 1646 John Venn was in command at Northampton, whence he was ordered to send recruits for the attack on Woodstock. For these services he received the thanks of Parliament, April 26, 1646. For the next few years he resided in, or near to, Hammersmith, but was constantly at Westminster, where

he was often in attendance as a member of the Army Committee of the House of Commons. A grant of £4000 had been made to him by Parliament, March 8, 1647-48, principally for his outlay and other expenses at Windsor. This he was to receive out of the estates of papists and other delinquents discovered by him. He was appointed "treasurer of petty emptions," August 14, 1649.

Venn was nominated a commissioner for the trial of the king. He was present at all but two of the sittings of the commissioners, and his name and seal are affixed to the death-warrant. As regards his religious opinions, he was at one time much under the influence of the well-known preacher, Christopher Love, who had been a chaplain in his regiment, and lived in his house at Windsor. He used to attend Love's preaching at St. Anne's, Aldersgate, and when he was no longer able to attend had his sermons taken down and sent to him. He died on the 28th of June 1650. Bate says that he was found dead in his bed in the morning, an account which is confirmed by his daughter's *Diary*, who speaks of the suddenness of his death, and which probably gave rise to the Royalist report that he committed suicide. It was referred to the Committee of the Army, July 3, 1650, "to consider of some recompense to be given for the faithful service of John Venn." His will was proved in London, July 1, 1650. Besides a small family estate at Lydeard, he left lands in several parts of England. He was attainted after the Restoration, August 29, 1660, and it is said that his estates were forfeited.

He married twice : first, Mary, daughter of a city merchant named Neville ; she was buried at All Hallows, August 1, 1625 ; secondly, Margaret, daughter of John Langley of Colchester, and widow of John Scarborrow, and previously of John Elliott. In the license, dated February 13, 1625-26, Venn is described as a silkman, of All Hallows, Bread Street.

His widow married, not long after his death, a "Mr. Wells," as we learn from a petition which she presented to the House of Commons, in which she is described as "relict of Colonel John Venn, and now wife of Mr. Wells, minister" (*State Papers*, Dom., April 14, 1657. This, her fourth husband, was the well-known Puritan minister, Thomas Weld or Wells, who had retired to New England during the Laudian period, but afterwards returned, and was active in London for several years during the Commonwealth. There is evidence of his intimacy with the family of John Venn in the fact that he edited, or at least wrote an introduction to, the *Diary* of his daughter Anne. This diary was published in 1658, under the title, "A Wise Virgin's Lamp burning, or God's sweet incomes of love to a gracious soul waiting for him. Being the Experiences of Mrs. Anne Venn, Daughter to Colonel John Venn, and Member of the Church of Christ at

Fulham, written by her own hand, and found in her closet after her death." She was about twenty-seven at the time of her death. The *Diary* is of the usual Puritan kind, and mainly occupied with her religious experiences, the family references being few. There is much in it about the ministers who had most influenced her, especially Christopher Love and Isaac Knight.

This Anne Venn died about the end of 1654. Her will was proved in the P.C.C. It mentions the names of many relatives, mostly on her mother's side, as well as those of several of her favourite ministers, amongst these the well-known Sidrach Simpson. The only relatives mentioned on her father's side are her brother Thomas and his son Thomas, which confirms the conclusion that her other brothers and sisters were then dead.

Colonel Venn's name was, of course, execrated by every Royalist writer. The account of him in Noble's *Lives of the Regicides* seems merely an expression of this hatred; and that in the *Universal Magazine* of December 1751 is even more bitter. A somewhat more moderate account is in a scarce volume at the British Museum, entitled "The Lives, Actions, and Execution of the Prime Actors and principall contrivers of that horrid murder of our late pious and sacred Sovereigne, King Charles the first of ever blessed memory; with several remarkable passages in the lives of others their assistants, who died before they could be brought to Justice. By George Bate, an observer of these transactions" (London, 1661). The following is what he says of Venn:—

Colonel John Venn was a citizen of London likewise, and, as I have heard, a decaying Tradesman. He was taken notice of for his more than ordinary forwardnesse against the King's Interest. When the wars increased his factious principles increased too, by reason whereof he was made Governor of Windsor, where he had an opportunity to increase his Estate, not only by the plunder of the Country thereabouts, but by getting into his possession much of the King's Household Stuff, Hangings, Linen, etc. He was a chief Consultator with the wicked Counsel of the Army at Westminster, and gave his vote among them to murther the King. Mr. Christopher Love, afterwards martyr'd, Chaplaine to his Regiment, who instructed him in better principles than he afterwards profest, and about the year 1645 or 1646 this Colonel Venn took a house in Aldersgate Street, London, for the only reason that he might be near unto Mr. Love, who then preached at St. Anne's Church, Aldersgate, not far from Venn's Lodging; and about 1647 this professed religious Colonel, being to remove from thence to a place called Brumley, near Kensington, by reason of which distance he could not enjoy, as he pretended, the benefit of Mr. Love's Soul-searching preaching. Whereupon he hired the Author of this small treatise to be a constant Hearer of Mr. Love, and to take his sermon in Short-writing, who made it his business all the week

following to transcribe them again into a legible hand, whereby what Mr. Love preached one Sunday at St. Anne's was the next Sunday republished to Colonel Venn in his own family. And yet this wretched man acts contrary even to these principles; in the year 1648 he forsook both Mr. Love and his religion too, and sides with the then prevailing factious party, and is nominated one of the judges of the King, whom by this time they had contrived to put to death to the great affliction and more than ordinary trouble of Mr. Love. Finally, he was one of the Judges of the King, and most impudently sat amongst them; he signed likewise to that blacke Authority that caused that unheard of Execution. And lastly, he proved a great enemy to Mr. Love, whom formerly he so earnestly thirsted after, and would not appear to help him either in his Imprisonment, Confinement, or Death. But at last he himself was not much regarded. The Judgments of God followed him in a troubled conscience; and at last, going to bed with his wife very well, he was found dead by her in the morning; no persons that were with him that night, nor his wife that lay by him, being in the least sensible of his approaching end.

John Venn had eight children by his two wives. Most of these died in infancy, and his daughter Anne, as we have seen, died before she was thirty. In fact, from the evidence of his will, and of the parish registers, it seems that only one son, Thomas, reached maturity.

This Thomas was a son by John Venn's first wife and was baptised at All Hallows, Bread Street, December 21, 1624.

In 1672 he published the work by which he is known, a folio of 206 pages, entitled *Military Observations or Tacticks put into Practice for the Exercise of Horse and Foot*, being the first of three parts or books in a volume of *Military and Maritime Discipline*, the two other parts dealing with Fortification and Gunnery. From the various prefaces to this treatise we learn several facts about his previous life. He speaks throughout as a strong royalist: "my sacred King," "his late Majesty of ever blessed memory," "to defend his Majestie's person, with all his rights and prerogatives, that such as our late intestine ruins may be for ever hereafter prevented." These are strong words on the part of the son of a regicide, and coupled with the statement (p. 186) "it was in the years 1641 and 1642 that I minded any of these military actions" (*i.e.* the duties of an ensign) there seems no doubt that he must have fought on the opposite side to his father. He expressly states that he served under Sir Hugh Wyndham, and in the "Epistle to all my fellow-officers" he says, "It is well known to most of you that I was a Commander of Horse myself." The Epistle to the Honourable Ralph Stawell, Deputy Lieutenant of the County of Somerset, tells us that he was then a captain in the foot regiment under that commander, that is, he was in 1672 a captain in the Somerset

Militia. One of these dedications is to the members of the London Artillery Company, to which he distinctly says he then did not belong, though he had received his instruction originally "from some who were leaders in your ground." (Can this refer to his father?) It was perhaps in return for this dedication that he was admitted as captain in that corps, May 26, 1674.

It seems plain, therefore, that the regicide's family presents one of those not very uncommon cases in which a household was divided against itself, and that father and son must probably have fought on opposite sides. There is one reference in his sister's *Diary* which I think must apply to him, as he was then, in 1654, her only near male relative. It is a petition proposed for a fast day,—“One desires your earnest prayers, and to spread the sad condition of one in near relation to her that conceiveth himself in a happy condition, when there are grounds enough to fear the contrary.”

It seems probable that after the war was over he retired to the family home at Lydeard. At any rate he was living there from 1654 onwards, as the baptism of several of his children is recorded in the register, as also the burial of his wife in 1673. In 1683 he was appointed controller of the Port of Bridgewater, and in 1684 held the office of mayor of that town. In this capacity he showed his zeal in the cause of the King by seizing from the mail-bags, and forwarding to London, some proclamations¹ which had been sent out by the Protestant party.

Like his father before him, he recorded his pedigree at the Heralds' College, in 1672. At this period it seems that he had one son John, and four daughters living. He married a Somerset lady some time before 1654, namely Avis, daughter of William Catford, of Boomer, in the parish of North Petherton. I have not succeeded in discovering his will, or ascertaining when or where he died. The burial of his wife is recorded on one of the tombstones at Lydeard, but there is no reference there to him. There is the baptism recorded, in the Lydeard register, of John, son of John, on December 2, 1679; the latter of these may perhaps be his son, but I could find no later entries about him. Nor can I find any evidence of the present existence of male issue of this Lydeard family.

¹ A few weeks after the accession of James II., viz. in February 1684-85, a number of proclamations were sent out, mostly to influential persons in the towns of the West of England, denouncing the King's supposed Papistical tendencies, and suggesting that sound Protestants should be selected for Parliament, etc. Some of these proclamations are given in the *Life and Works of Kettlewell*, i. 36. Their significance at Bridgewater is evident when we remember the large support obtained in this district by Monmouth a few months later.

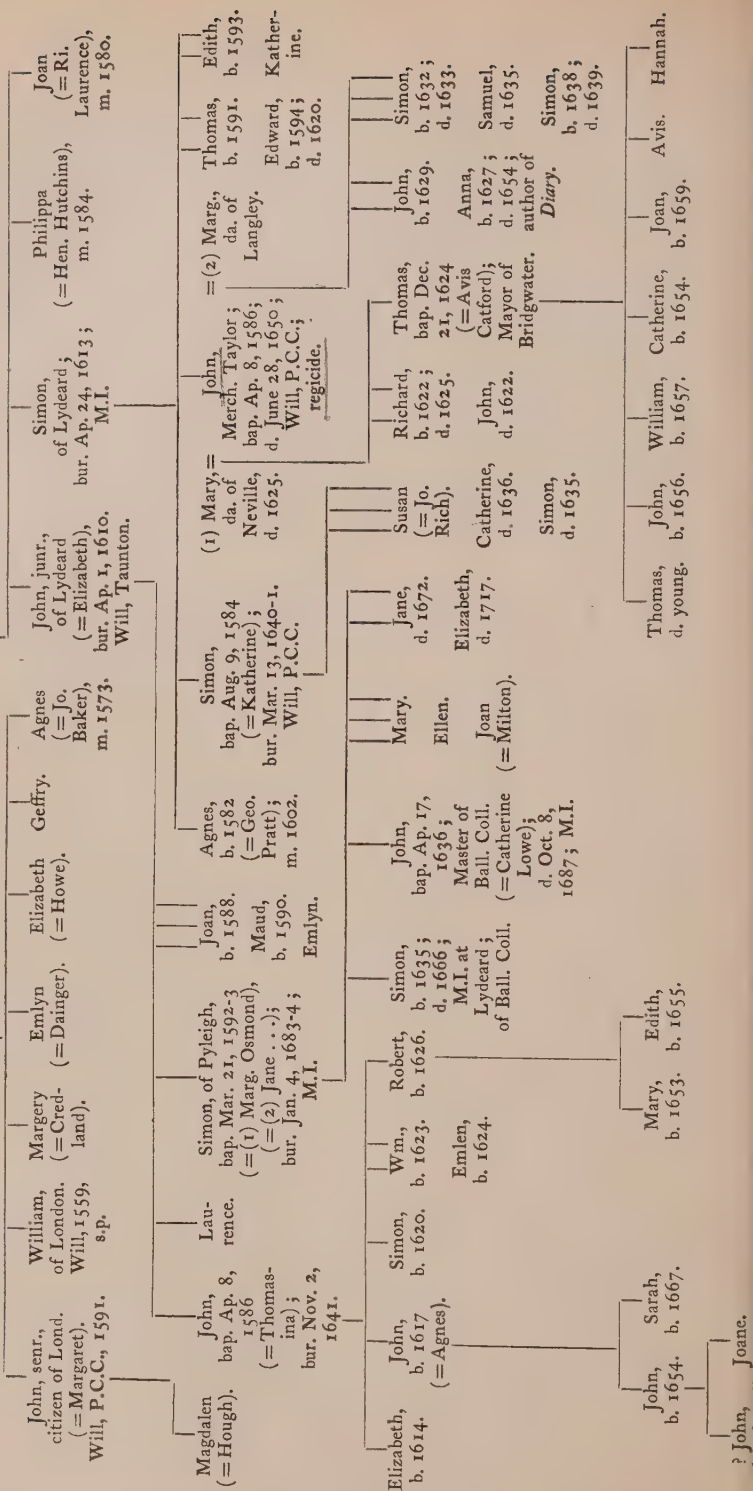
His appointments at Bridgewater were, I suspect, marks of Royal favour. An examination of the parish register, over many years, shows no trace of his having been a resident there. North Petherton, the home of his wife's family, is close to that town.

Besides the regicide and his son, another member of this Lydeard family rose to some distinction. This was John Venn, son of the regicide's first cousin Simon. He was a Fellow of Balliol, Oxford, Master of the College 1678 to 1687, and Vice-Chancellor of the University in 1686. He married Catherine, "sister to Sir E. Lowe, one of the Masters in Chancery, daughter of the son of Lowe of Fisherton, Wilts, by his wife sister to Sir E. Hyde, Earl of Clarendon and Lord Chancellor" (MS. F. 4, 69, Ashmol. Mus.). According to the historian of Balliol College he does not seem to have in any way distinguished himself as master. He owned estates in Pyleigh and elsewhere, and was buried in Lydeard Laurence. The arms he claimed (as described already, p. 211), impaling those of Lowe, are still to be recognised on his tombstone.

I append the signature of John Venn, as given on the Death Warrant—

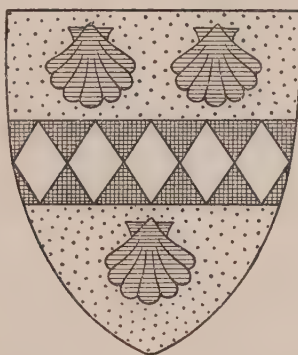


(1) . . . = Simon Venn, yeoman, of Lyd. St. Lawrence; = (2) Agnes . . .,
bur. Oct. 18, 1582. Will, Taunton. | bur. July 24, 1597.



IV. GAY FAMILY

The Gays of Goldworthy and Frithelstock belonged to a Devonshire family of some antiquity, which duly appears in the Visitation of that county in 1620, but is believed to be now extinct in the male line. The following pedigree is partly constructed from the above Visitation, but has been continued in both directions by the industry of Mr. W. P. Hiern, F.R.S., of Barnstaple, whose grandfather married into the family. I give his results (*see* Pedigree) in an abbreviated form.



Or, a fess sable charged with five fusils argent, between three escallops azure.

Only one member of the family attained any general reputation. This was the poet, John Gay, who seems to have been a great-grandson of Anthony of Frithelstock, brother of Matthew, the Rector of Bratton Fleming.

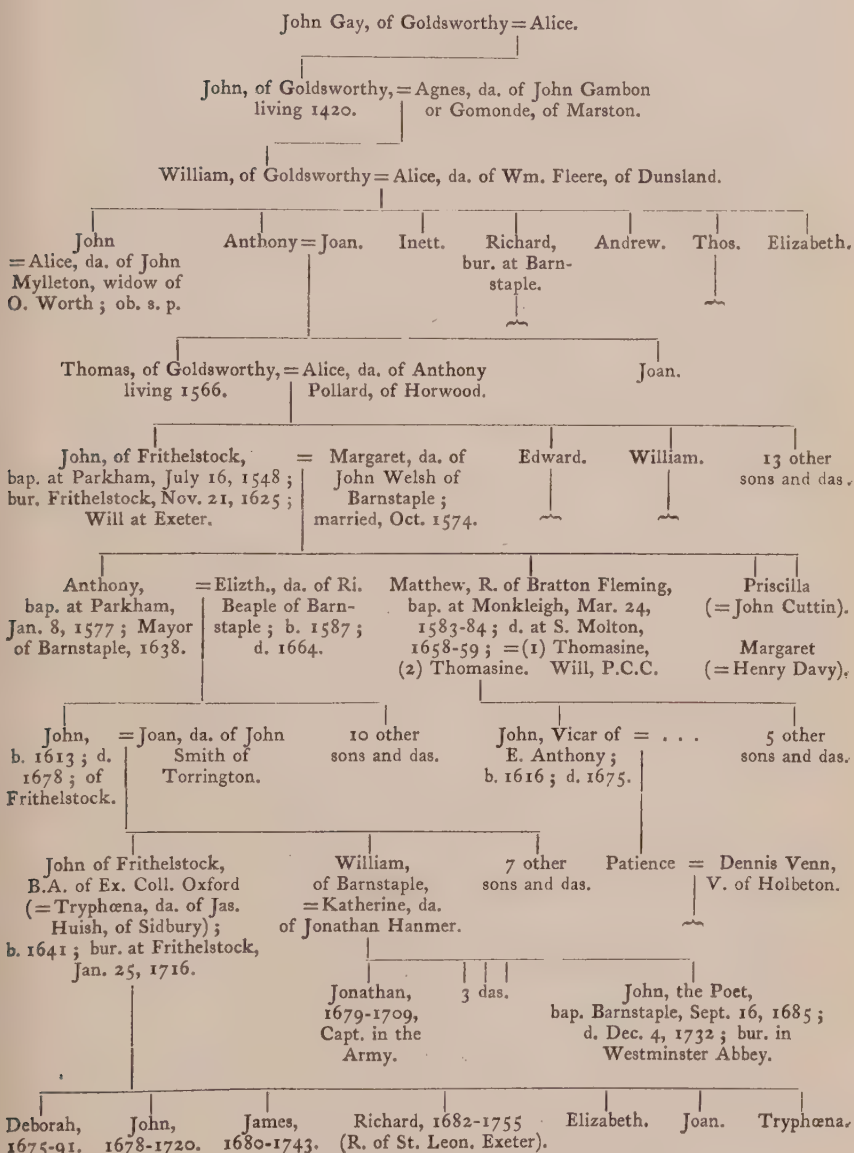
Dennis Venn married a daughter of John Gay of East Anthony, who was a son of Matthew Gay. This Matthew was presumably born at Frithelstock, as his father John is described as being "of Frithelstock," and was buried there November 21, 1625. He was probably born about 1581 or 1582. He was a graduate of Cambridge, according to the statement of his successor at Bratton, communicated to Mr. Walker, but his name is not recorded in the Cambridge lists. He was presented by his father a few weeks before the death of the latter, to the Rectory of Bratton Fleming, near Barnstaple, being instituted September 17, 1625. As the early registers of this parish are lost, we have no contemporary reference to him until the days of the Commonwealth. Like most of those whose names occur in these family memoirs, of whose principles and practice anything is known in those times, Matthew Gay was a

Royalist and Church of England man. Walker gives an account of his troubles, but, as before, I prefer to quote the original account given by his informant. Mr. J. Wauchope, Rector of Bratton, in a letter dated April 13, 1704, says, "A worthy man, and for morals commendable and unblameable. In the beginning of the Rebellion he was so persecuted by the soldiers of the rebellious party, that, to escape being cast into prison, he fled into Wales, and lay hid where he could be secure and safe, being in a widow's, and was strubbed of all his household goods by the soldiers and their assistants, a fickle mob. . . . He lived in the town of South Molton, having bought a house there, where he lived several years, but preached only once, and not troubled for it. As for his family it consisted only of servants, all his children being dead, and none of the descendants now living that can give any notices; his circumstances being indifferent. He married after he came to South Molton."

The statement that all his children died before him is not correct. In his will, dated 1655 and proved in February 1658-59, he mentions at least one daughter. It appears that he was twice married, the lady's name in each case being Thomasine; the second wife survived him.

His eldest son, John, was born about 1616, and was admitted a scholar at Winchester in 1629. He entered Exeter College, Oxford, September 9, 1634, where he resided about a year, but did not graduate. He was ordained by the Bishop of Oxford in 1644—as we learn from one of the Visitations of the Exeter Diocese—and some time during the Interregnum was appointed to the vicarage of East Anthony, near Plymouth. Here he remained undisturbed until his death in or about 1675. The early registers of this parish are lost, and I have not succeeded in finding his will or administration. As far as we know, he left only one daughter, Patience, who some years after her father's death was living at Holbeton, where her name occurs in the churchwardens' book as subscribing to the relief of the Irish Protestants in 1685. She married Dennis Venn, as his second wife, January 6, 1689-90.

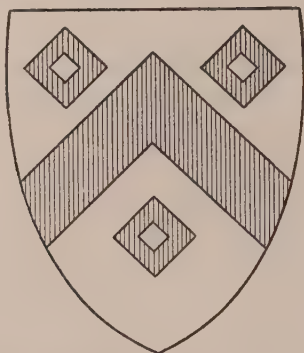
GAY PEDIGREE (OUTLINE)



V. ASHTON OF PENKETH

The Ashtons of Penketh were a family of Lancashire gentry who, after flourishing for many generations, disappeared, so far as the male line is concerned, not long after the Revolution. Their decay, I think, was mainly due to their loyalty.

Penketh itself was a hamlet in the district or chapelry of Farnworth, near Warrington. Like many other places in Lancashire, the original parish in which it was situated was of



ARMS OF ASHTON OF PENKETH

Argent, a chevron between 3 mascles gules (Vis. of 1567). They quartered those of Penketh of Penketh, viz. 3 kingfishers proper, plumed about the neck azure.

vast extent; the mother church of Farnworth, as of Liverpool itself, being Prescott. Penketh, in old days, must have been a somewhat remote place, near the shores of the Mersey; but the neighbourhood of Warrington on the one side, and, still worse, of Widnes on the other side, have reduced the natural features of the district almost to the condition of the Black Country.

The Ashtons of Penketh are included in the Lancashire Visitations of 1567 and 1613, when the following arms were allowed to them: "Quarterly; 1st and 4th, argent, a chevron between three mascles gules (Ashton); 2nd and 3rd, argent, three popinjays¹ proper, plumed about the neck azure" (Penketh). These arms are very different from those of the other armigerous families of the name of Ashton, of which there were several in the county of Lancashire. As will be seen by the pedigree, the Penketh quarterings came in at an early date, and represent the long since extinct family of that name and place. In the Visitation of the County by Dugdale in 1664-65 there is no mention of the Ashtons of Penketh: they had apparently lost much of their property, and soon afterwards disappeared from the place.

¹ Corrected to "kingfishers" in the original Vis. of 1567.



JOHN ASHTON.

From the Engraving after J. Riley's portrait.

The family troubles began during the Civil Wars, when every member espoused the Royalist cause. The then eldest son of the family, John Ashton, son of the Thomas who was buried at Farnworth in July 1645, was a captain in the Royal army. He was killed in the attack on Bolton, February 16, 1642-43. He is described in a contemporary narrative (*Chetham Soc.* ii. 83) as "Captain Ashton of Penketh, eldest son of his father."

His next brother, Thomas, who inherited the property on the death of his father in July 1645, suffered heavily in fines for his loyalty. Like his brother, he seems to have served in the King's army. The following is the account in the Royalist Composition Papers (published in *Record Soc. of Lancashire and Cheshire*, vol. xxiv.): "Delinquency: in arms against the Parliament. He laid down his arms and submitted himself unto Sir John Meldrum, Knight, . . . in November, 1644. Took the National Covenant in the county; and subsequently took it before Benjamin Spencer, minister at Bow, April 10 last, and the Negative Oath, May 7, 1646. Seized to him and his heirs in possession of the manor of Penketh, and of divers lands and tenements to the same belonging, and of a wind mill and water mill there, being of the yearly value of £28 : 10 : 0; also of an estate in old rents, parcel of the said manor, worth £9 : 15 : 8. Also, in right of his wife, of certain lands, etc., in Newtown, Cheshire, worth £27 a year. Also, from the death of his mother, Mrs. Katherine Ashton, of other lands in Penketh, worth £60 a year; also of other lands in Penketh and Great Sankey, coming to him at the expiration of eight and a half years, held for that period free by one Mrs. Elizabeth Fitzwilliams, worth £50 a year.

"He claimed a deduction of £30 per annum, being £10 each to his younger brothers Andrew and William, and to his sister, Christian; also a further charge of £600 made by his father, viz. £200 each to his three other daughters, Katherine, Elizabeth, and Margaret. Fine £192 : 8 : 4.

"Certificate signed by Benjamin Spencer, declaring that petitioner was at the time residing at the house of Mr. Peter Warbarton, in the town of Bromley, parish of Bow, Middlesex, and voluntarily took the National Covenant.

"Particular of his estate. As for his personal estate he hath nothing but the clothes to his back."

In the House of Commons Journals there is an entry October 2, 1648, "That this House doth accept the sum of £192 : 8 : 4, for a fine for the delinquency of Thomas Ashton of Penketh, gent., . . . and for taking off the sequestration of his estate."

He seems to have returned to his Lancashire home after the Restoration, as from 1663 onwards, for some twenty years, there

are occasional references to the Ashton family in the parish register of Farnworth. He was buried there, February 18, 1675-76, the entry being, "Thomas Ashton, armiger, of Penketh."

He had several sons and daughters, as will be seen in the pedigree; the eldest of whom, Colonel John Ashton, died in 1707, leaving a son, Strange, who died in 1756. I cannot find that there is surviving male issue of any of these. It seems certain that the family soon parted with the Penketh estates, and finally disappeared from the neighbourhood.

The next and best known sufferer in the cause of the Stuarts was John Ashton, the Jacobite, the associate, with Lord Preston and Mr. Elliott, in the political plot of 1690, and the only one of the conspirators who suffered death for his share in it. Conspicuous as he was at the moment, however, his fate is singular in respect of the entire ignorance which seems to exist about him on the part of the historians and the writers in biographical dictionaries. He bursts into notoriety on the last day of December 1690, at Gravesend, when Captain Billop catches the ship in which the party had embarked, and he disappears as suddenly at Tyburn less than a month afterwards; leaving apparently no trace behind, except a mass of ephemeral literature consisting of pamphlets respectively denouncing the "Traitor" and glorifying the "Martyr." In the State Trials he is merely described as "John Ashton, gent., of Covent Garden"; whilst Macaulay and most of the other historians call him simply "a Lancashire gentleman."

He was, however, an Ashton of Penketh. This is decisively shown in the Administration Act of his effects (P.C.C., September 20, 1698) granted some years after his death to his father-in-law, Edward Rigby, in which he is described as "Johannes Ashton, nuper de Penkett, in Com. Lancastriæ." (This, of course, refers to his family origin, for he did not reside there, having been long about the Court in London.) Moreover, there was a portrait taken of him by Riley, the well-known Court painter of the day, which was afterwards engraved. On this are given the name, as also the arms of the Ashtons of Penketh, which, as already stated, are very different from those of any other of the Lancashire families of the name. A third piece of evidence, which serves to assign him his place, with reasonable certainty, in the pedigree, is afforded in the report of his trial. Reference is there made to his "Aunt Dupee," who had some post about the Court, and used to attend the service at St. James's Chapel. Now in the will of William Ashton, brother of the Thomas who died in 1675 (Chester Registry, proved 1668), we find that one of his sisters was named Dupuy.¹ This makes it fairly certain that the

¹ It is printed Dupny (*Rec. Soc. of Lancashire and Cheshire*), but I feel sure that this

Jacobite sufferer was a son of Andrew Ashton of Liverpool, for the only other known John of his generation was the Colonel who died in 1707. Andrew's will was proved in 1679. He desires to be buried at Farnworth, the family burying-place, and mentions his son John. What adds force to this identification is the fact that John Ashton seems to have had the privilege conferred on him of appointment as an "out-burgess" of Liverpool in 1685. "In the Charter of James II. to Liverpool (April 1685) amongst the members of the Common Council appointed by the charter appears John Ashton. . . . He is described as 'of Penketh.' The position of his name in the list indicates that he was a gentleman, and non-resident. The name does not appear in a list of the Council in 1692." The entry of admission is, "1686, June 22. John Ashton of Penketh, Esquire, took the oath of a Common Counsell-man" (Letter from E. M. Hana, Esq., Sec. of the *Hist. Soc. of Lancashire and Cheshire*).

As to John Ashton himself, not much is known. He must have been born in 1653 (a very awkward date, so far as parish registers are concerned), as he is described as thirty-two in his marriage license of 1685. Presumably he was born in Liverpool, as his father seems to have resided there. The latter is several times mentioned in the lists of burgesses¹ as "Captain Andrew Ashton," so that he too, like his brothers, was probably in the King's army. His name continues in the rolls until 1675. He desired, as stated, to be buried at Farnworth, but I do not find his name in the register.

John Ashton must have entered the service of the then Duke of York at an early age, for in his trial he speaks of having served him sixteen years. He does not appear to have had a regular commission in the army, but as one of the contemporary pamphlets describes him as, "commonly called Major Ashton," it seems likely that he was one of those to whom the King granted a sort of nominal army rank. His real office, however, was in the Royal household, where he is doubtless the "John Ashton, clerk to the Commissioners," in the Duke of York's household, in 1684; and

must be a misreading for the much more probable form Dupuy. Two or three generations of gentlemen of this name held office at the Court: "Henry Dupuy, servant to the Duke of York; reversion to his sons James, Thomas, and Lawrence, of the custody of the Pall Mall" (*Cal. of State Pap., Dom., 1661-62*). There are similar grants in 1672 and 1687, "with the usual fee or allowance of £100 p. ann., together with the use of the house or lodge called the Mall House." A Dupuy is several times mentioned in Bishop Cartwright's *Diary* in connection with John Ashton.

¹ In the Liverpool Burgess roll of 1644 the name of *Andrew Ashton* appears, with the prefix "Captain," and from its position on the list would seem to have been added at the time the Royalist forces held the town. It continues in all the lists to 1675. In the rolls of 1671 and 1675 the name of "Major Thomas Ashton" occurs, apparently inserted in 1668. This is probably his brother Thomas, who had to compound for his estates under the Commonwealth" (E. M. Hana).

"clerk to the Council"¹ in 1687, as described in Chamberlain's *Notitia*, under the heading "Officers of Her Majesty's Revenues." But, as in the case of other secret agents and conspirators, his real functions were latterly of a far more serious and important kind than his nominal office would imply. In fact, the family account, derived from his daughter, that he was "privy purse to James II.," was practically not far short of the truth, so far as his relations to the Queen were concerned.

In 1685 he married Mary, daughter of Edward Rigby, mercer, of Covent Garden, whose house soon became a noted meeting-place for the Jacobites, and, as Bishop White Kennett says (*Hist.* iii. 575), came to be called "The Royal Club." His marriage license (Vicar-General's Office) is dated December 15, 1685. The parties are described as "John Ashton, Esq., aged about thirty-two, of St. Martin's in the Fields, and Mary Rigby, aged about nineteen, daughter of Edward Rigby, mercer, of St. Augustine." Of her father, one of the family of "Rigby of Layton and Burgh," some account is given in the following section. Like the Ashtons, these Rigbys remained consistent adherents of the Royal cause as long as this could be maintained.

John Ashton had several children, whose names appear in the register of St. Augustin, or rather in that of "St. Faith² under St. Paul's." Probably the Ashtons lived with Mr. Rigby, whose business was at first carried on in Paternoster Row. One son, James, reached boyhood, and, according to Narcissus Luttrell (*Diary*, November 8, 1692), was made a baronet by the ex-King at Versailles, as a recognition of his father's devotion. One daughter only grew up. This was Maria Ann Isabella Margarettia Beatrix. This unusual combination of names was due to the fact that the Queen, Mary Beatrix, stood godmother to her.³ This must have been very shortly before the abdication.

John Ashton's zeal and activity in the cause of his fallen master soon showed themselves after the flight of James. There are many references to him in the diaries and pamphlets of the time. For instance, in the *Diary*⁴ of Cartwright, Bishop of

¹ Macaulay calls him "clerk of the closet to Queen Mary." His relations were evidently with the Queen more than the King.

² The Church of St. Faith originally stood beyond the east end of St. Paul's. When the old Cathedral was extended in this direction, part of the crypt was assigned to the parishioners as a parish church; whence the title "St. Faith under St. Paul's." After the great fire the parish was united to that of St. Augustin.

³ Several interesting Stuart relics are still in the possession of her descendants (at present, 1903, in that of Miss Venn of Freston Lodge, near Ipswich). Amongst these are a carved chair, given by the Queen as a christening present; an inlaid cabinet; a clock which had belonged to Charles II.; and a small piece of the ribbon of the garter worn by the King. Several of these heirlooms are specially mentioned in Mary (Ashton) Venn's will, proved (P.C.C.) 1762. There is also a miniature of Prince James (the Pretender), in possession of my cousins the Howes, inherited from the same source.

⁴ Edited for the Camden Society, in 1843, by Mr. Joseph Hunter. Cartwright was

Chester, he is frequently mentioned in company with Lord Preston, Colonel Worden,¹ Mr. Dupuy, and others of the party. "October 3, 1686. I preached at St. Augustin's . . . and was kindly entertained at Mr. Rigby's, Mr. John Ashton's father-in-law, at the Blue Posts in the Haymarket." There are several other notices of his dining with the Ashtons, and of their dining with him. The Bishop left him, by will, a ring, he being apparently the only non-relative included amongst these bequests. In Clarendon's *Diary*, the date and juxtaposition with the Bishop of Ely leave no doubt that Ashton is referred to in the following passages: "April 16, 1690. In the evening the Bishop of Ely and Mr. As—— arrived. April 17. In the morning Mr. As—— went to London." The Bishop of Ely, Francis Turner, it will be remembered, was involved in Lord Preston's plot, but saved himself by flight. Again, in the autobiography of a scoundrel named William Fuller, who, after having been for some time confidentially employed by the ex-King, went over to the opposite side and betrayed his companions, we read: "I had likewise bills of exchange for £35,000 to be remitted from London to Scotland by several hands. . . . This contrivance was most ingeniously undertaken and managed by Mr. Ashton and Mr. Graham"² (p. 33). This was in 1690, just before Fuller betrayed his accomplices. It explains the reference made in the trial of Ashton to a visit which he had recently made to Edinburgh. Graham, it will be remembered, was put on trial with Elliott and Ashton. The same Fuller, in "A plain proof of the true father and mother of the pretended Prince of Wales," written after he had changed sides, makes the following statement: "Mr. Ashton was to pay the money; he was her Majesty's treasurer in England, and since hanged for his zeal in a bad cause." He gives also a letter from the ex-Queen, dated March 8, 1689-90, in which the following passage occurs: "I have ordered a sufficient sum of money to be remitted amongst the bills which F. (*i.e.* Fuller) brings over to Ashton."

Towards the end of December 1690 John Ashton started on the desperate enterprise³ that cost him his life. It was a plot

a notorious Jacobite. He succeeded Pearson, as Bishop of Chester, in 1686, and died in Ireland, whither he had followed King James.

¹ General Worden was Treasurer to the Queen, Mary of Modena. John Ashton is a witness to his will, proved (P.C.C.) 1690, from which source the signature at the bottom of the portrait has been reproduced.

² Sir Richard Graham, Baronet, was Viscount Preston in the Scottish Peerage. At his trial he made an unsuccessful attempt to be treated as an English peer. His patent for this having been made out by James after his flight to France, the claim was only an aggravation.

³ This was not his first attempt to get to France, whether or not for political purposes. Luttrell, for instance, says, under date May 17, 1690, "Col. Butler, Mr. Ashton, Capt. Matthews, Capt. Lane, and Wm. Butler, who were lately taken at Dover, making their escape to France, were brought up this day to the Court of the

for calling in the aid of the French king in favour of the restoration of James; Lord Preston, Ashton, and Elliott, being apparently the most active agents in the scheme. The interesting details of their start and speedy capture are very fully given in the report in the *State Trials*, in the evidence of the various witnesses called for the prosecution. The arrangements for the voyage were in the hands of Ashton. As the wife of the boatman testified, "I was sent for to a house in Queen Street by Cheapside, to know whether he could have a smack to go for France: I told him yes, I could help him to one. He told me there were two or three gentlemen bound for France as merchants to fetch silk, and I was there two or three times, and Mr. Ashton met me there." Chief-Justice Holt: "Look upon the gentleman; is that he?" Mrs. Pratt: "Yes, that is the gentleman, and he met me there. He hired the vessel, but first of all he desired us to meet at the Dog Tavern upon Ludgate Hill to make the bargain, and we did meet there, and were there about an hour or an hour and a half. The next morning we met, and there we made the bargain for £100, and there was sixpence broke in two pieces. Mr. Ashton gave one half of the broken sixpence to Mrs. Burdett, and when the master of the vessel brought the other half of the sixpence, or 1s, either of us, we were to have the £100." The next night they had a final meeting at the house of Mrs. Ashton's father, Edward Rigby, "at the Seven Stars in Covent Garden," where, in fact, John Ashton and his wife seem then to have been living. Mrs. Pratt continues, in answer to the question, "Had you any discourse with Mr. Ashton's wife after they went away?" "We had little discourse, only she gave me some victuals and drink; and she said she hoped I would not tell of her husband." "What else did she say?" "She hoped God would deliver them out of the lion's mouth." "Did she say anything about cock-crowing?" "Yes, she said she thought she should have no good luck, for the cock crowed." That evening, Wednesday, December 31, 1690, the party of four—Ashton, Elliott, Preston, and his servant—started in a wherry, about ten o'clock, from Surrey stairs to near the Tower, where the smack was waiting for them. Here they embarked, and got as far as Gravesend by the next morning, when the tide turned. They evidently suspected that their enterprise had become known—as the event proved to be the case—and several times retired into hiding in a sort of ballast hole in the hind part of the smack. At last a Captain Christopher Billop, who, it seems, had been somewhat

King's Bench, and were all severally admitted to bail upon good sureties." This attempt was mentioned by Ashton in his own defence, to show that he had already, before the plot, had private occasion for a journey to France.

of an acquaintance of Ashton and Elliott, overtook them in a pinnace. On the pretext that he was looking for seamen to impress, he proceeded to search the smack, and soon dragged forth the four fugitives. They had the incriminating bundle of papers with them, to which they had taken the precaution to tie a piece of lead so that it could be sunk in the river in case of their capture. Unfortunately for Ashton, one of Billop's sailors told his captain that he had seen him thrust a parcel into his bosom. "Mr. Ashton was the last that came up; and when he came up, a waterman of the Captain's calls to him and says, 'That gentleman that came up last has put something in his bosom, but what I can't tell.' So the Captain took Mr. Ashton by the arm and turned him about, and says, 'What did you put in your bosom?' Says Mr. Ashton, 'Nothing but my handkerchief,' and pulled out his handkerchief and shewed him. Then the Captain put his hand in and pulled out papers with a piece of lead tied to them." This was fatal to them at the trial, for the papers contained not only information as to the numbers, armament, etc., of the British fleet, but a direct invitation, partly in cypher, for the intervention of the French in favour of the late King James. Ashton solemnly declared that he did not know the contents of these papers. Bishop Burnet (*Hist. of his own Times*), who examined them, and who was acquainted with his handwriting, considered that some of them were written by him, but suggests that they may have been copied out by him carelessly and hastily.

Some one had certainly betrayed them, perhaps Fuller already mentioned, as Billop, in his evidence, states that he was sent for by the Lord President, who told him "there were divers persons that had papers of dangerous consequence, and were going to France, and desired me to use my skill for seizing and securing of the papers." The party were then at once taken back to London, examined before Lord Sydney, the Lord President of the Council, and committed to the Tower.

At the trial, pressed as to why he was at such pains to get to France, Ashton had no more plausible story than that he was going there about money matters concerning himself and his late friend General Worden. He declared that he did not know the contents of the papers, and that his anxiety to get rid of them was simply due to a fear lest there might be something in them to compromise others. A graphic account is given by the witnesses of how the prisoners kept beseeching, and attempting to bribe, their captors to throw the papers overboard, and how Mr. Elliott, as they passed under London Bridge, prayed that it might fall down and crush them. This was on the night of December 31, 1690, and during the following morning.¹

¹ Billop afterwards petitioned for some remuneration for his services, he having

Ashton, in his defence, lays stress on the sincerity of his attachment to Protestantism. Four divines—Drs. Fitzwilliam, Lake, Bursh, and Davenant—were called in evidence. Dr. Fitzwilliam testified to the frequency of his attendance, both at daily service and at the Communion, “at the service of the church in the Protestant part of the Family, at St. James’, where I was chaplain”; and to his efforts to induce his aunt, Mrs. Dupee, not to go over to Popery. But the testimony of this divine was damaged by his being at once asked in Court whether he had taken the oaths to the King and Queen, which he had to admit he had not done. Ashton, pleading that he had had the sacrament administered to him quite recently, the doctor was forthwith asked if the prayers he had used were “as they are now altered,” and again had to admit that this was not the case. This attempt did not serve the prisoner, and only evoked the sarcastic comment from the Judge that “they were all so careful of the Protestant Religion that they design to restore and establish it by the King of France.”

No real defence was possible, and the prisoners were convicted and sentenced to death, under the usual ghastly conditions, for high treason. The trial of Ashton only lasted one day, being begun and completed on January 19, 1690-91. Proceedings were rapid in those days, where State matters were concerned.¹ The prisoners only started on their journey on the night of the 31st December, and their trial was begun on the 17th January. Ashton was tried on Monday January 19, and hung at Tyburn on the 28th.

The disgusting proceedings at such executions, so far as the half-hanging, dismemberment, etc., were concerned, were remitted by Royal favour. Narcissus Luttrell says in his *Diary*: “Mr. Ashton was carried in a coach (from Newgate) to Tyburn. He said but little to the people, but thanked the sheriff for his kindness to him, and delivered a paper to him which he desired might be printed. He had two clergymen with him, men who had not taken the oaths to the Government, who assisted him with their prayers. He was not much daunted, and so was executed; and “lost the good sight of his eyes, through the extreme cold” of the weather (*State Pap. Dom.* 1692).

¹ Many of the circumstances of a criminal trial at that day seem strangely cruel to us. In cases of high treason the prisoners had to look to their defence in Court for themselves. In answer to Ashton's plea for the aid of counsel the Chief Justice replied: “We must not allow your Counsel to pick holes in the Indictment: that never was done.” The shortness of notice, too, was a great hardship. As Ashton replied, in answer to the Judge's remark that “seven days' time is very fair notice,” “Three days of the seven we had not the liberty of seeing any friend or counsel, or anybody, not till Tuesday night (this was Friday), and that we got with great application and great charge to get an order for our counsel to come to us, so that though we have had seven days' notice, yet we have had but three days in all to consult with anybody.”

his body, without being quartered, was delivered to his friends and put into a coffin to be privately buried." One of the non-jurors above mentioned seems to have been Jeremy Collier, who absolved him by laying on of hands, as he afterwards did to Friend and Parkyns: "At the execution of Mr. Ashton in 1690-91, absolution was given him in the same form, with imposition of hands, at the same place and upon the same occasion" (Defence of the Absolution given to Sir William Parkyns).

The two other prisoners were also condemned and sentenced to death. Lord Preston, after one or two reprieves and partial confessions, was finally pardoned on making a full confession of all that he knew about the plot. The Government evidently had no high opinion of him, as the President of the Council, Lord Sydney, writing to the Queen, says, "I think he will do you more service than his head is worth, and therefore I am for suspending his execution" (*State Pap. Dom.* 1691). Elliott also escaped execution, but whether on the same conditions, I have not been able to ascertain. He is described as "Captain Edmund Elliott."

The following is the account of the execution, as given in a contemporary Broadsheet, "A True Account of all passages at the execution of John Ashton, gent.," preserved at the Bodleian.

"Wednesday, January 28, 1690-91, being the day appointed for the execution of John Ashton, gent. He was carried from Newgate to the usual place of execution in a Hackney coach; for though, according to his sentence, he should have been drawn on a hurdle, as is usual in cases of high treason, yet, upon the humble petition of his relations to the Queen, her Majesty was graciously pleased to remit the drawing and quartering, and ordered the dead body to be delivered to the relations entire to be by them privately interred. And so he came to the place of execution about eleven of the clock, with the usual guard and a multitude of spectators. There were in the coach with him a divine of his own acquaintance whom he brought with him to perform his last offices for him, and two of the sheriff's officers. The ordinary of Newgate was in the cart, designing to serve him in his passage out of this world; but the prisoner, being desirous to have the gentleman he brought with him to officiate, desired the sheriff that the ordinary might not concern himself therein, which was granted, and accordingly Mr. Ordinary withdrew. The minister and the prisoner, both kneeling down, the service of the church was read suitable to such an occasion, the prisoner behaving himself very devoutly. Soon after, another divine did join with them (Jeremy Collier?). Prayers being ended, which continued about half-an-hour, the prisoner addressed himself to Sir F. Child, one of the sheriffs, and gave him a paper, telling him that what he had thought fit to say he had committed to that paper, and that but one person beside himself knew the contents of it, and desired him to dispose of it as he thought

fit. He thanked the sheriff for his civility to him at the trial, and likewise for that he had procured leave for him to be carried in a coach, and desired him also to return his thanks where else they were due. Then he took leave of the two ministers, to whom he commended his wife and children to be instructed and comforted. Which when he had done, he called the executioner and gave him five guineas, and requested him to do his work well. He declared himself to die in the Communion of the Church of England, and that he doubted not but by the merits of his Saviour to be happy in it. Then he said, I have no more to do than to think of dying and bade the executioner take off his periwig,¹ and put on his cap, to which was fastened a handkerchief to cover his face. Which done, and the rope fastened about his neck, and being tied up to the tree, he stood expecting the driving away of the cart, refusing to give any sign. When the cart was gone, he hung about half an hour, and then was cut down, and his body conveyed away by his friends in order to its being privately interred."

He was buried the same night at eleven o'clock, in the family vault of his father-in-law, Edward Rigby. The entry is simply, "John Ashton, Mr. Rigby's son-in-law, was buried in St. Faith's, January the 28, 1690-91."

His unfortunate widow—she was only twenty-four at the time of his death—had a short and sad life. There are several references to her in contemporary diaries and pamphlets. For instance,² "Mrs. Ashton, widow to Mr. Ashton who was executed for his being concerned in my Lord Preston's affairs, went to the Court of St. Germain's after her husband's death, as thinking she had some merit to plead for a kind reception, but she was much deceived. . . . A few days after her arrival priests were sent to tell her that nothing but her being a Roman Catholic could recommend a woman to the Queen's service, which the poor gentlewoman declining to comply with, was neglected; and dying soon after was refused burial till her father, Mr. Rigby of Covent Garden, as a mighty favour and at great charges obtained leave from the Court of St. Germain's to have her body brought over to England, and buried her in Covent Garden church." (This last statement seems doubtful: at least the parish clerk informs me there is no such entry in the register.) The dates of some of these occurrences are supplied in N. Luttrell's Diary: "November 8, 1692, Mrs. Ashton, wife to him lately executed, with her son, went for France: and at her arrival at Paris, King James made him a baronet." "February 21, 1692-93. Paris letters say Mrs. Ashton³ died at St. Germain's, and was ordered by King James to be embalmed and sent to England."

¹ A glance at his portrait, which represents him in a very long full-bottomed wig, will show that such a costume was not designed for occasions of this kind.

² View of the Court of St. Germain's, 1690-1695. Printed in the *Harleian Miscellany*, vi. 395.

³ According to the evidence of the Administration of her husband she died in 1695.

As to John Ashton's family, there are entries of the burial of three infants in the register of St. Faith's. Two children survived him, the eldest of whom cannot have been more than two or three years of age at the time. The boy James, according to the statement just recorded, was made a baronet by the ex-King. He died young; perhaps in France. The much-named girl—Mary Ann Isabella Margareta Beatrix—was presumably¹ baptised at St. James's chapel. It seems, from the family tradition, of which she was doubtless the source, that her childhood was spent at the house of her uncle and guardian, Richard Rigby, at Mistley, near Manningtree, Essex.

Under the circumstances of their death it is not surprising that neither John nor Mary Ashton left any will. The Administration of the effects of the former was not taken out until 1698, September 20, nearly eight years after his execution. It was granted to Edward Rigby, the father-in-law. The widow was then dead, and the one daughter was the sole survivor.

The practice of confiscating the entire property of those condemned for treason was beginning, I believe, to be abandoned at this time. But that such punishment was not entirely remitted in this case seems plain from one of the grants under William III.: "Assignment to Robert Manning for a mortgage made by Charles Earle of Manchester of the Park Farm or enclosed ground called Ashill Park in the county of Essex, for £1500 paid to him by John Ashton, gent., forfeited to his Majesty by the attainder of the said Ashton."

From the will of Edward Rigby (proved, P. C.'C., 1711) it would seem that Mary Ashton received little or nothing from her father, as Mr. Rigby desired, "in case she does not get more than £500 from the estate of her deceased father," that his wife should pay her that sum. This was twenty years after her father's death, when she was his sole representative. From the statements on page 48, however, it seems that eventually something was recovered.

A brisk pamphlet controversy sprang up immediately after John Ashton's death. The Trial itself was published in a couple of months, in a very full report, and its popularity is shown by the fact that it was afterwards translated both into French² and into Dutch. It is interesting, not only on account of its political importance, as showing the critical state of affairs during the first years of William's Government, but also from the many sidelights

¹ I am told that the register does not go so far back as this date. She was born, according to the *Parentalia*, June 27, 1690, i.e. six months before her father's death: but this must be a mistake for 1689.

² The origin of the French translation is interesting. It was published by the National Assembly Jan. 26, 1791, exactly a century after the English version. According to the preface it was circulated in order to show the French people how fairly and considerably a trial, even for high treason, could be held under the jury system.

which it throws on social matters, for instance, the river-life amongst the watermen and others on the Thames. As to the paper which Ashton gave to the sheriff, this also was eagerly sought for. At the end of the copy in the Bodleian is a MS. note, "This speech was printed by stealth about the middle of March 1690-91, and was scattered in the night time about London streets. I saw it at Oxon in a private hand March 16."

The "speech" itself is calm, dignified, and earnest. He declares his devotion to his King, James, "whom he had served for sixteen years;" and asserts the legitimacy of the infant Prince. It concludes with the following touching words: "Forgive, forgive, Oh Lord, all my enemies. Comfort and support my dear afflicted wife, and poor babes. Be thou a husband and father to them. For their sakes only I could have wished to have lived, but pardon that wish, Oh God, and take my soul into everlasting glory."

The following personal characteristics are from an anonymous pamphlet, "The Vindication of the Dead."

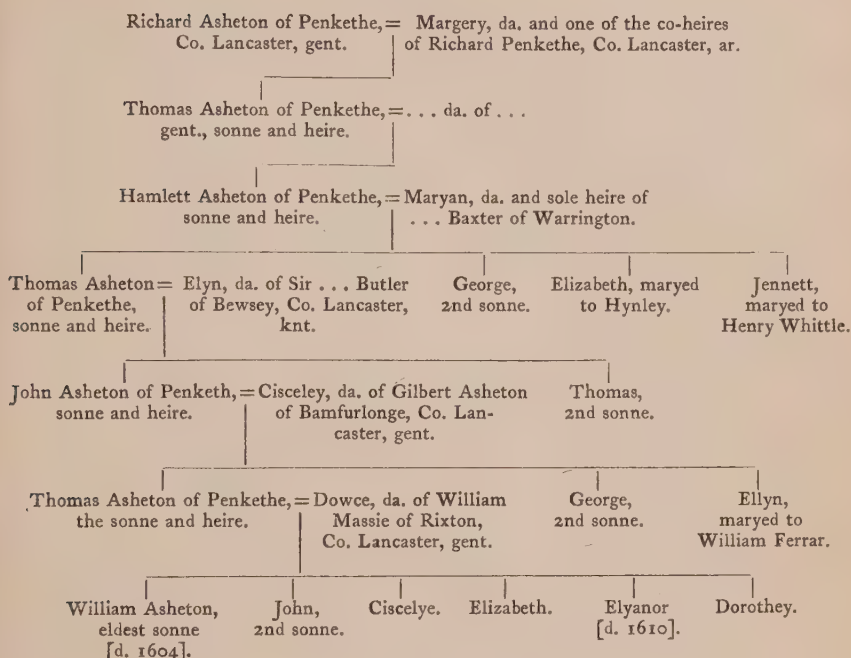
"It had been very material to have made proof of that (*i.e.* the hand-writing of the incriminating papers) upon his trial, which they might easily have done had it been true,¹ no man's hand being better known, and they having in their hands volumes of his writing when he was in places at the Court." "I would have the religious of all persuasions know that I could give instances of his piety and mortification that are miracles, considering where he was bred and the age in which we live. I will end his character by saying he could not dissemble with men, even in his looks, and that he had awful regard towards God. Christianity made him forgive his own personal enemies, but he could not caress a base man or palliate a vile action. He thought solidly, spoke sensibly, and died calmly. He was the kindest husband, the most indulgent father, and the best of friends."

Some time before his death his portrait had been taken by John Riley, a well-known Court painter of the day, as likewise that of his wife. These portraits were in existence in 1762, when they were bequeathed by his daughter, Mrs. Richard Venn, to her daughter Mary; the Stuart relics above mentioned being left to her eldest son, Edward. As I have already said (p. 47), all trace of these portraits has long disappeared. According to Noble (continuation of Granger's *Biographical History*, i. 218), two engravings of this portrait were taken—one in folio by R. White, and the other in duodecimo. The latter I have never seen: the former, though scarce, is occasionally to be obtained. It represents a rather handsome young man dressed in the long full-bottomed wig commonly worn by gentlemen of the period. The arms of Ashton of Penketh are displayed in the margin. It has been reproduced for this volume.

¹ No letter, or other MS. in his hand, seems to have been preserved, so far as I can ascertain.

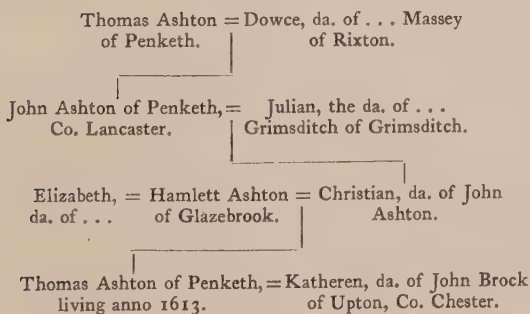
ASHTON OF PENKETH.—PEDIGREE I.

Visitation of 1567.



ASHTON OF PENKETH.—PEDIGREE II.

Visitation of 1613.



ASHTON OF PENKETH.—PEDIGREE III.

Visitation of 1613; Cai. Coll. MS.; Piccope MS. vol. ii. p. 79; Registers, etc.

Thomas Ashton = Douce, da. of
of Penketh, . . . Massie
d. May 18, 1573
(Inq. p.m.).
of Rixton.

William,
b. 1543;
ob. 1604; s.p.
John = Julian, da. of
m. 1571; bur.
June 26, 1620
(Inq. p.m.).
Grimsditch.

Eleanor,
bur. Mar. 3,
1610-11.

Elizth.

Ciscely.

Elizabeth

Dorothy.

John,
bap. Nov.
12, 1575;
bur. Nov.
20, 1590.

Jane,
bur. Ap.
9, 1588.

Wm.

Richard,
bur. July
26, 1583.

Timothea,
b. 1576
(= Jo. Crosby
of Chester).

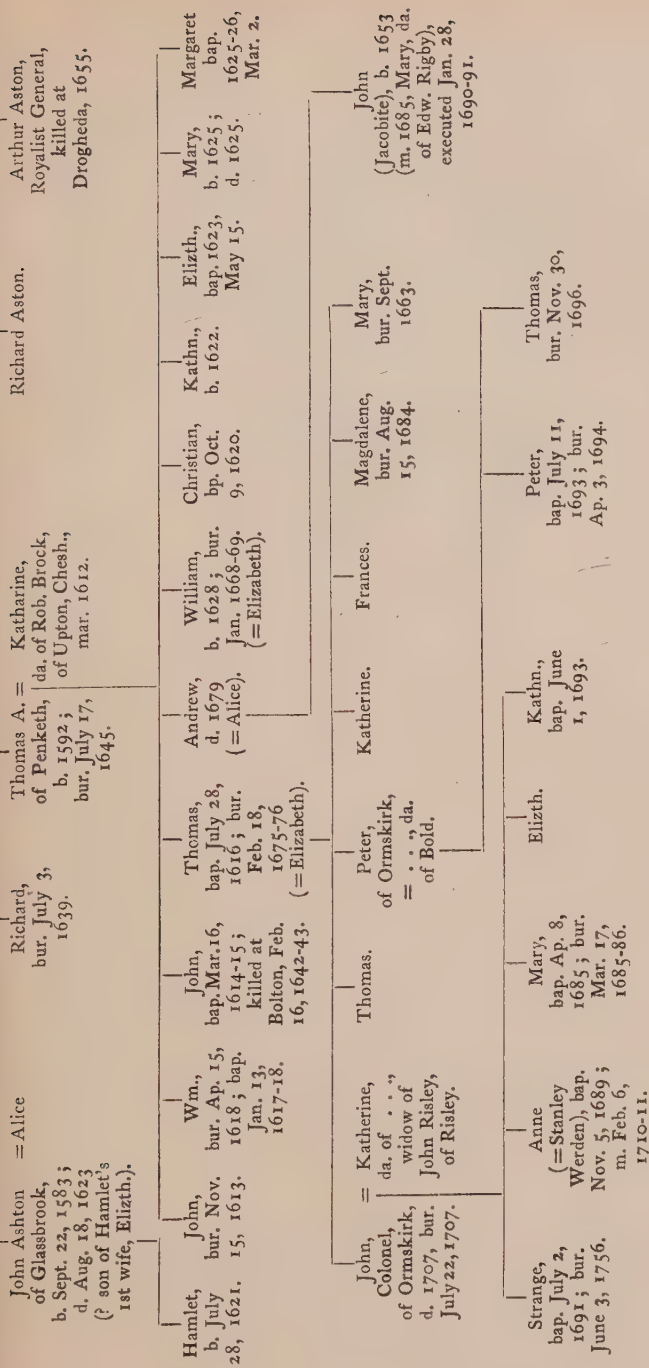
(1) Hamlet
Ashton, of
Glassbrook;
d. Oct. 11,
1590; his 1st
wife was
Elizabeth . . .
(Inq. p.m.).

= Christian =
(2) Arthur,
2nd son of
Sir Thomas
Ashton of
Aston.

Margt.,
b. 1585;
= Rob. Heywood,
m. 1602-3,
Jan. 5.

Anne,
b. 1583;
= (1) Jas.
Starkey,
= (2) And. Man-
nering.

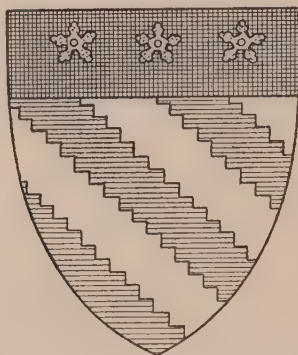
Elizabeth
(= Peter
Harrison).



VI. RIGBY OF BURGH AND LAYTON

Like the Ashtons of Penketh, the Rigbys of Burgh and Layton were a Lancashire family of ancient and gentle descent. Like them, too, they suffered for their loyalty to the King, though in a less degree. The two accompanying pedigrees, the former taken from the Heralds' Visitation of Lancashire, the latter compiled from various sources, will serve to explain the fortunes of the family.

Of the two seats from which they took their name, Burgh



ARMS OF RIGBY OF BURGH AND LAYTON

Bendy of six indented, argent and azure. On a chief sable three cinquefoils or.

was in the parish of Standish, near Wigan.¹ Layton was a village in the parish of Poulton, and is now mainly covered by the extensions of modern Blackpool.

The principal sufferer in the King's cause in the case of these Rigbys was Alexander. He was for some time in the Royal army. "At Furness, Mr. Alexander Rigby of Burgh, leading the Lancashire forces in an attempt to relieve the garrison of Thurland Castle, was utterly defeated by Colonel Alexander Rigby at the head of the Parliamentary troops" (Despatch to House of Commons, October 17, 1643). The latter of these namesakes belonged to the Preston family. Both he and his son, also Alexander, were very active Parliamentarians. The father was in command of the forces at the famous siege of Lathom House.

Alexander of Burgh was born about 1583. He was admitted a student of Gray's Inn in 1606; married Catherine, daughter of Sir Edward Brabazon, of Nether Whitacre, Warwickshire; and

¹ "Burgh Hall, in Duxbury, now a farmhouse, once the residence of the Standishes" (Baines, iii. 520).

apparently led the life of a country gentleman until the troubles began. He fought, as we have seen, in the Royal army, and after resistance was suppressed he was heavily fined. The following is the account in the Royalist Composition Papers :—

Alexander Rigby, of Burgh, Lanc., Esq. His delinquency that he was a Commissioner of Array, and otherwise assisted the forces raised against the Parliament. His petition is dated January 16, 1646-47. He hath taken the National Covenant before John Sumner, minister of Poulton, as by his certificate attested . . . and the negative oath before the Committee in the country, dated December 25, 1646. That by virtue of a deed dated January 25, 7 Charles I. (1632), made upon the marriage of Edward Rigby, his son and heir apparent, he is seized of a frank tenement for life, the remainder for his said son for life. . . . One capital messuage called the Burgh . . . a messuage and lands called the Hulls of Layton. . . . His personal estate has been seized and disposed of to the value of £2000, out of which he craves to be allowed £200, so much due to one Alexander Holt of London. . . . That he compounded here, April 1, 1647, and his fine was set at a moiety of £959; and afterwards, in November 1648, his said fine was reduced to a sixth, amounting to £361 : 3 : 4, which he hath fully paid.

His son Edward also fell in the same cause during an attack on Bolton. "About the last week of Lent, 1643, divers souldiers from Wigan came up to the mood walls shotting disperatly, and were resisted manfully. At the last a son of Mr. Alexr. Rigby of Brugh mounted a mood wall, threwe himself over crying 'a Towne, a Towne'; he, with some few as disperat as himself was slayne" (*A Discourse of the Warr in Lancashire*, Chet. Soc. xlii. p. 22).

He married Mary, daughter of Edward Hyde of Norbury, Cheshire, a connection of the Hydes of Westhatch, from whom was descended Lord Clarendon.

Of the sons of this Edward, Alexander, the eldest, was, likewise, in the Royal army. He was sheriff of Lancashire in 1677, "in which year he gratefully erected a monument on the battle-field of Wigan in honour of Sir Thomas Tyldesley, to whom he was cornet, and who was killed there."

The younger brother of Alexander, Edward, went into business in London. Like so many of the younger sons of gentlemen of family and estate, he began from the beginning, being apprenticed as a boy to a mercer¹ in Paternoster Row. He was made free

¹ John Bent, mercer. He again was of armigerous stock, being a son of Richard Bent of Cosby, Leicestershire, whose arms and pedigree are given in the Visitation of 1619. He was born about 1624, and was made free of the Merchant Taylors' Company in 1646. He died October 16, 1689, and was buried at Houghton on the Hill, Leicestershire, where there is a monument to him and to his wife (Anne, daughter of John Newton, of Houghton). See Nicholls, *Leicestershire*, i. 614.

of the Merchant Taylors' Company, December 7, 1662. According to correct form, he married his master's daughter, Anne Bent, and carried on the business of a mercer for many years, at first in Paternoster Row and afterwards in Covent Garden. He was buried at St. Faith under St. Paul, where his son-in-law, John Ashton, had been buried, March 1, 1710-11. Anne Bent's sister Amy married John le Neve, by whom she was mother of the author of the *Fasti*.

This Edward Rigby followed the family traditions, and was evidently a strong sympathiser with the Jacobite cause, though he did not display his sympathies to as dangerous an extent as his son-in-law did. His later house in Covent Garden, "the Seven Stars," was a well-known place of resort, after the Revolution, of the supporters of James. Bishop White Kennet refers to it as "the Royal Club; so they called it, in Covent Garden." As was mentioned in the last section, the final arrangements for the Preston and Ashton Plot were made at this house; and Rigby, like Ashton, is frequently referred to, along with other well-known Jacobites, in Bishop Cartwright's Diary. Edward Rigby, however, was fortunate enough to keep himself out of actual mischief, and acquired in time a considerable fortune. He bought (in 1680, according to Morant) the reversion of some of the Essex estates of Lord Oxford, the last of the famous De Veres, which he inherited in 1703. These were at Mistley, not far from Harwich. Here he seems to have spent his declining years, and, according to the *Parentalia*, his grandchildren, James and Mary Ashton, spent some of their early days here. Apparently he died in London, as he was buried in the family graveyard, at St. Faith under St. Paul, March 1, 1710-11.

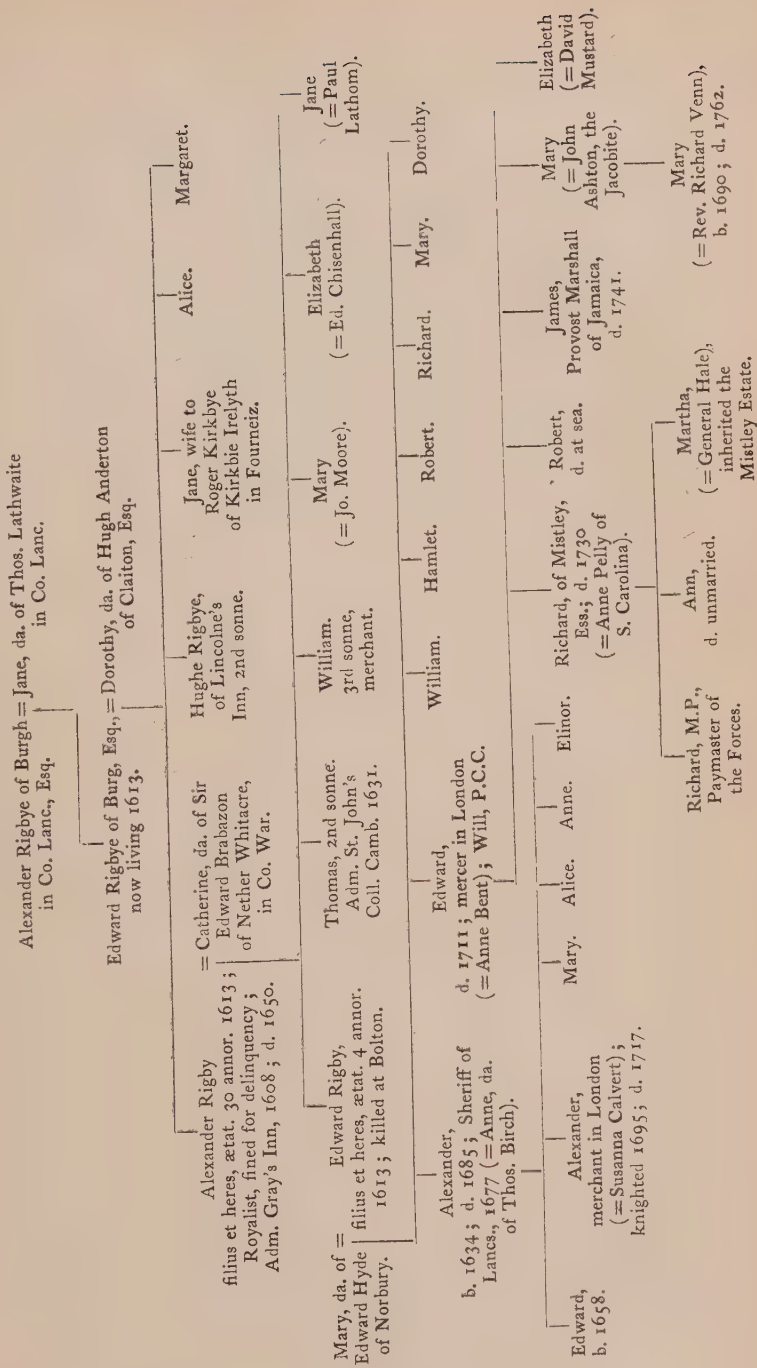
His son Richard built the mansion at Mistley, where he died in 1730; and was succeeded in turn by his son, also named Richard, the famous, or rather notorious, Member of Parliament, Paymaster of the Forces, etc., of whom an account is given in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. After his death the property passed into the possession of his brother-in-law, General Hale.

One other member of the family deserves a moment's notice. Edward's elder brother Alexander had a son, Alexander, who went into business in London. He was at first very successful, and was knighted, November 28, 1695. Then his fortunes failed. As Colonel Chester says (*Westminster Registers*), "Losing £40,000 by the enemy seizing his vessel, he became bankrupt, and died in the Fleet Prison, although through his grandmother (Hyde) he was second cousin to the Queen."

PEDIGREE OF RIGBY OF BURGH AND LAYTON

(*Visitation of 1613; continued from Wills, Registers, etc.*)

This Family does not appear in the Visitation of 1567. According to that of 1613 their arms were granted in 1573.



VII. KING FAMILY OF HULL

William King was a successful merchant at Hull, where he was in trade, principally with the Baltic ports. The firm had for many years a branch establishment at Riga, where two of King's sons for a time conducted the business. He was born in or about the year 1720, and was apprenticed to a Hull merchant (George Woodhouse), May 24, 1734. He is then described as "son of William King, of Lambeth, Kent" (*sic*), but I have not discovered anything about his earlier parentage. He was admitted freeman of the town in 1742, was "chamberlain" in 1761, and seems to have played the part of an active and benevolent citizen. He married, in or about 1755, Katharine, daughter of Robert Thorley¹ of Hull, by whom he had three sons and a daughter, as shown in the following pedigree. He died May 11, 1781, and was buried at Trinity Church, Hull.

His two eldest sons, William and Robert, were both engaged in mercantile business at Riga, in connection with their father. The third son, George, was entered at Trinity College, Cambridge, in October 1779. He had a very successful career, and was for many years a Fellow of the College. In his young days, as already stated, he was tutor to the Duke of Rutland, whom he accompanied on many tours in England. He was a canon of Ely from 1810, and was latterly Rector of Whitwell, Ruts., a living in the gift of the Duke. He was all his life passionately devoted to music, and was a very good performer on the piano-forte. His religious views inclined moderately towards those of the Evangelical party. He was of too retiring and sensitive a nature to take any prominent part, but he showed his firmness, on one occasion, in a very creditable way. The mastership of Jesus College was offered to him by the Bishop of Ely—in whose absolute gift it then was—provided he would drop his connection with the Bible Society. "I take this opportunity of repeating to you what I said in my former letter, viz. that the mastership of Jesus is at your service, provided you are willing to accept it upon the same conditions on which the present Archdeacon of Ely accepted the archdeaconry, that is, relinquishing your connection with the Bible Society" (Letter from the Bishop,

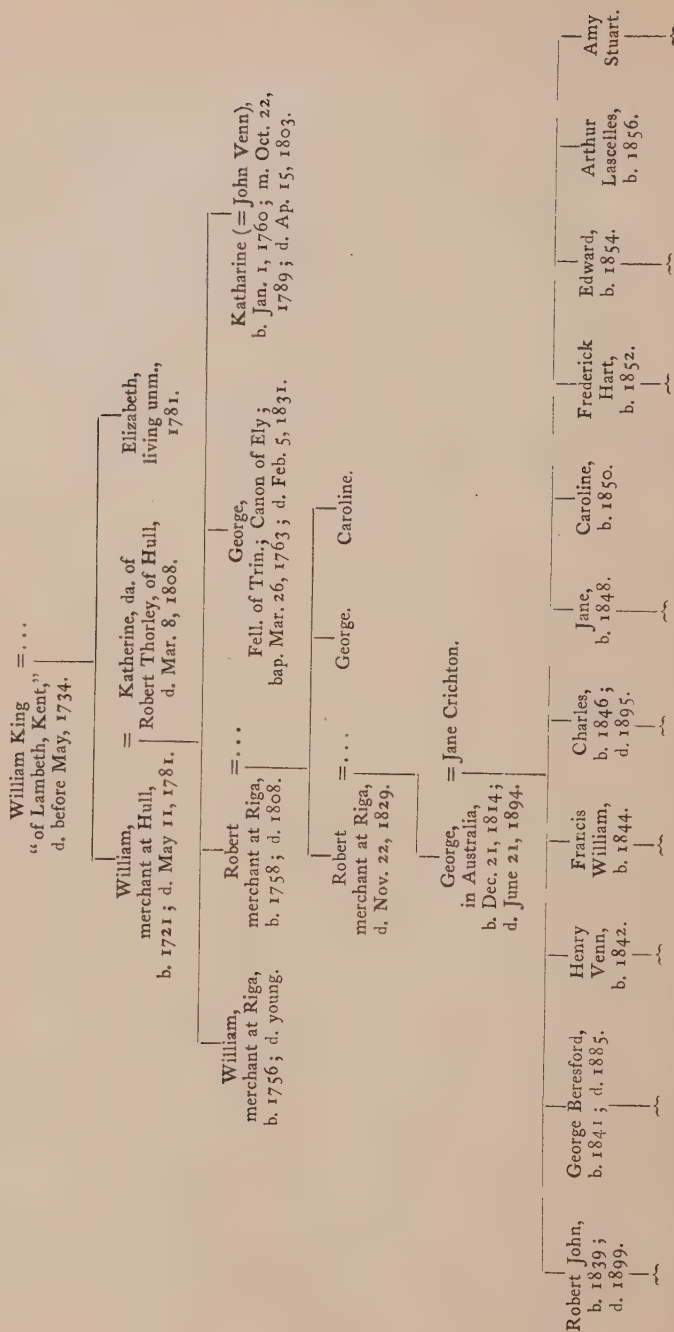
¹ The Thorleys were for several generations a commercial family in Hull, principally concerned with the Baltic trade. Robert Thorley, Katharine's eldest brother, was a merchant in Russia. Robert senior was born in 1702, married (June 10, 1728, at York Minster) Catherine Jackson, of St. John Delpike's, York, and had a family of four sons and three daughters. One of these daughters, as above stated, married William King. Another married a Mr. Bolton who settled as a merchant in Russia, and whose descendants are, or lately were, carrying on business as "Bolton and Co." at Riga and Narva.

November 20, 1820). This he entirely refused to do, though he does not seem ever to have spoken for the Society, or to have put himself prominently forward in its behalf. He died at Drypool, Hull, February 5, 1831, when on a visit to my father.

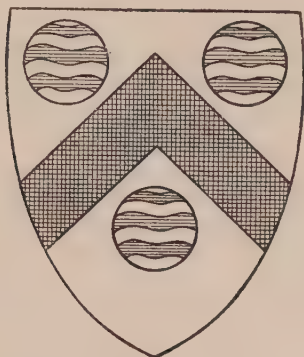
His nephew Robert followed his father's profession as a merchant at Riga. George King, son of Robert, went as a young man to Australia, being then the last male representative of his family. He was very successful there; and at the time of his death in 1894 there were, or had been, about sixty children and grandchildren to represent him. What may be the numbers in the following generation I have not ascertained.

I have a portrait of George King, as a boy, in pastel; it is signed "G. E. pinxit, 1776" (? George Engleheart). Another, also in pastel, represents him a few years later. A water-colour, taken in mature life, was given by my uncle, John Venn, to one of the Australian cousins.

KING PEDIGREE



VIII. SYKES FAMILY OF YORKSHIRE



ARMS OF SYKES.

Argent, a chevron sable between three sykes or fountains proper.

The Sykes were for many generations a considerable commercial family, first at Leeds and afterwards at Hull: at the latter of these places they were largely concerned in the importation of Swedish iron for the manufacturers at Sheffield. They first appear as an armigerous family in the Yorkshire Visitation by Dugdale in 1664. The accompanying outline pedigree will show our own derivation, and that of the present baronet family of Sledmere, as far back as it is known.

Like most families which can be traced from soon after the Reformation, they have furnished sufferers to one or another religious and political cause. But their "confessors" are of a rather more varied type, as regards convictions, than is usual, as amongst them may be found those who have suffered for the Romish faith, for the cause of Church and King, and for that of the Quakers. As will be seen, the pedigree almost starts with a martyr, in the person of Edmund Sykes the seminary priest. The following account¹ gives most of what is known about him:—

"Mr. Edmond Sykes, a seminary priest, Rhemist (*i.e.* trained at the College of Rheims), born at Leeds or thereabout, being brought up at school, after went to Oxford, and after to the seminary beyond sea in France, or Douay, and thereafter proceeding in virtue and learning took Holy Orders, and being desirous to benefit his country with that talent which God had given him, came over and lived a very strict and strait life, wandering as a poor pilgrim, coming to

¹ From Father Chr. Grene's MS. in the English College at Rome, as printed in the *Records of the English Province of the S. Jes.* (Series v.-viii. p. 736).

Leeds, did help many with his holy life and doctrine; there fell sick with an extreme ague. There one Arthur Webster, who was a Catholic, and through wrath, envy, and lowness of life, fell from his faith and Catholic religion, knowing where this good man lay, having procured a commission for to apprehend Catholics, went and took Mr. Sykes, being sick, brought him to York before the Council, who committed him to the Kidcot, and through feebleness and infirmity he went to church, yet straight he recalled himself back, that he kept him still there. And from thence he was banished, in which time he went to Rome upon some occasion that happened whilst he was prisoner. And as he was praying there in a church, he had a revelation which foreshowed unto him that he should return into England, and there receive his crown, for otherwise he determined to enter into a religious habit. After which he returned into his country, and coming to a kinsman's house of his about Tanfield, or in Wath, who presently caused him to be apprehended, and brought to York before the Council, who sent him close prisoner to York Castle, where straitly he was kept. Yet there he gave himself to much contemplation and prayer, abstinence and discipline; for Wednesday and Friday he used it sharply, with much watching. In the Lent following, at the Assize, he was brought before the Judges, at the bar, amongst the felons. The Judge, upbraiding him with his former actions, he answered, 'It was the infirmity of sickness which caused me to go to your service, and not for any liking I had of it; the which I have repented, and now detest to do it. Neither did I wholly that which was required, or like of your doing, wherefore I was kept in prison, and so banished.' They proceeded against him, and condemned him as a traitor, whereat he rejoiced and thanked God. Being brought back, and kept that night most straitly from his other fellow-prisoners, and watched in a chamber that night, the next day following, 23rd of March (1587-88) he was laid on the hurdle in the Castle yard, where heretics did assault him, and from thence to the place where he was executed." According to the law in such cases, he was hanged and quartered.

The reference in the *Douay Diary* is briefly this:—

1586, June 16. Angliam petitori discesserunt . . . et Ds. Edmundus Sikes, presbyteri.

1587. Edmundus Sikesius, ex incarceratione exul, ex exule martir.

In the second generation from the above we reach the times of the Civil War, and here the family seems—as in not a few other cases—to have been divided against itself, one brother being for the King and the other for the Parliament. The former, Richard, was Rector of Kirkheaton, Yorks. The following is the reference to him in the *Report of the Committee for Compounding* (vol. i. 977): "1645, November 20, Richard Sykes begs to compound for delinquency in absenting himself from home, and going into the King's garrison. He never bore arms. 1646, April 23, Fine at one-third, £1350; but because he hath lost a good church-

living worth £300 a year, and a great estate, has a great charge of children, and was an opposer of bishops, and a very moderate man, the Committee recommend to the House to take but £1000. Fine paid." He had already been sequestered from his living, for apparently his support of the King quite outweighed his merits as an opponent of bishops. After the loss of his living he seems to have retired southwards, as he died in Islington, January 10, 1652-53, at the age of fifty, and was buried at Clerkenwell.

His brother William, a merchant at Hull, sided with the dominant Parliamentary majority in that town. He seems to have taken an active part during the siege by the Royal troops. His sufferings, however, came from his own party, as he was imprisoned for many months from inability to repay sums which he had borrowed. According to his petition (August 2, 1648) he "lent £8000, more than his whole estate, in money, plate, arms, etc., to Lord Fairfax, Sir John Hotham, and the Committee of Co. Lincoln. He borrowed £1000 for Lord Fairfax, but the bill being protested he was cast into prison, and lay there twelve weeks. And now he has been kept in prison for twenty-six weeks, to his utter ruin." He adds that he was also "thrice plundered, up to £2000, and twice imprisoned, by the enemy." Whether he ever obtained redress on this account is not clear. If he did, he must have got into trouble again, as he died a prisoner in York Castle, and was buried in St. Michael's, Ousegate. His will was proved July 5, 1652.

His wife also—Grace, daughter of Josiah Jenkinson of Leeds—followed her husband into York Castle in later years. But this was on a different account, as she suffered as a Quakeress. She was committed to prison in 1684, and died September 26, 1685. A similar fate attended their son Richard, about the same time, as he was lodged in Hull gaol in 1685, presumably on account of the same religious opinions as his mother. He died March 26, 1694.

His son Daniel was a merchant of Hull and Knottingley. He married into a Royalist family of Pontefract, his wife being Deborah, daughter of William Oates,¹ mayor of that town.

The family had so far been very fairly successful in trade. The first, however, to secure any prominent place in com-

¹ The Oates family were for long of some local importance in Pontefract, three successive generations furnishing the mayor of that town. There are references to both William, above, and to his brother Richard, in the Royalist Composition Papers. William's delinquency was "that in 1643 he sent horse and arms to Sir William Saville for the King; that from 1642 to 1646 he constantly frequented Pontefract and other castles and furnished them with provisions"; Richard, "that he deserted his dwelling in the town and went into the castle, and lived there while it was a garrison holden for the King against the Parliament, and contributed voluntarily towards the maintenance of those forces, and continued there till the time of the surrender."

mercial affairs was Richard, son of the above Daniel. He was born in 1678, and was a large merchant in Hull, of which town he became chamberlain in 1707. He had also an estate and residence at Sledmere. He married twice. By his first wife, Mary, daughter and co-heiress of Mark Kirkby of Sledmere, he had, as eldest son, Richard, who succeeded him at Sledmere, was Sheriff of Hull, 1740, and Sheriff of Yorkshire, 1752. Richard dying without issue, the estate came to his younger brother, Rev. Mark Sykes, D.D., Rector of Roos. Mark was created a baronet in 1783. From him descended the present family of Sledmere, including the famous Yorkshire sportsman, Sir Tatton Sykes, who died at the age of ninety-one in 1863.

Richard Sykes' second wife was Martha, daughter of Tobias Donkin of Hull.¹ His eldest son, Joseph, settled at West Ella, near Hull. He was successively Sheriff and Mayor of Hull, and Deputy-Lieutenant of the East Riding. His fortune was mainly acquired by a lease of the White Iron Mines in Sweden, of which metal he was one of the largest importers in England. He died November 26, 1805, aged eighty-two.

The fourth son of Joseph Sykes, Nicholas, resided at Swanland, near Hull. He was for a time in the army, and afterwards engaged in the family business at Hull. He died April 29, 1827. My father married his daughter Martha in 1829.

The fifth son, Daniel, was the best known of this generation. He was for a time Fellow of Trinity, Cambridge, Recorder of Hull, and M.P. for that town, in which capacity he was well known as an early supporter of the Reform movement. He was F.R.S. A brief life of him was written by his friend George Pryme, Professor of Political Economy at Cambridge. His sister Mary Ann married Henry Thornton, of a family originally Yorkshire. He was a member of the well-known banker family, and one of the hereditary residents at Clapham.

¹ The monument in Trinity Church to Richard Sykes gives his father-in-law the name of William; but from a study of the family wills I feel convinced that his name was Tobias, and that he was probably a doctor in Hull.

SYKES PEDIGREE (OUTLINE)

Richard Sykes, of Sykes Dyke, near
Carlisle (Vis. of Yorks, 1664).

William,
of Leeds, clothier, living 1576.

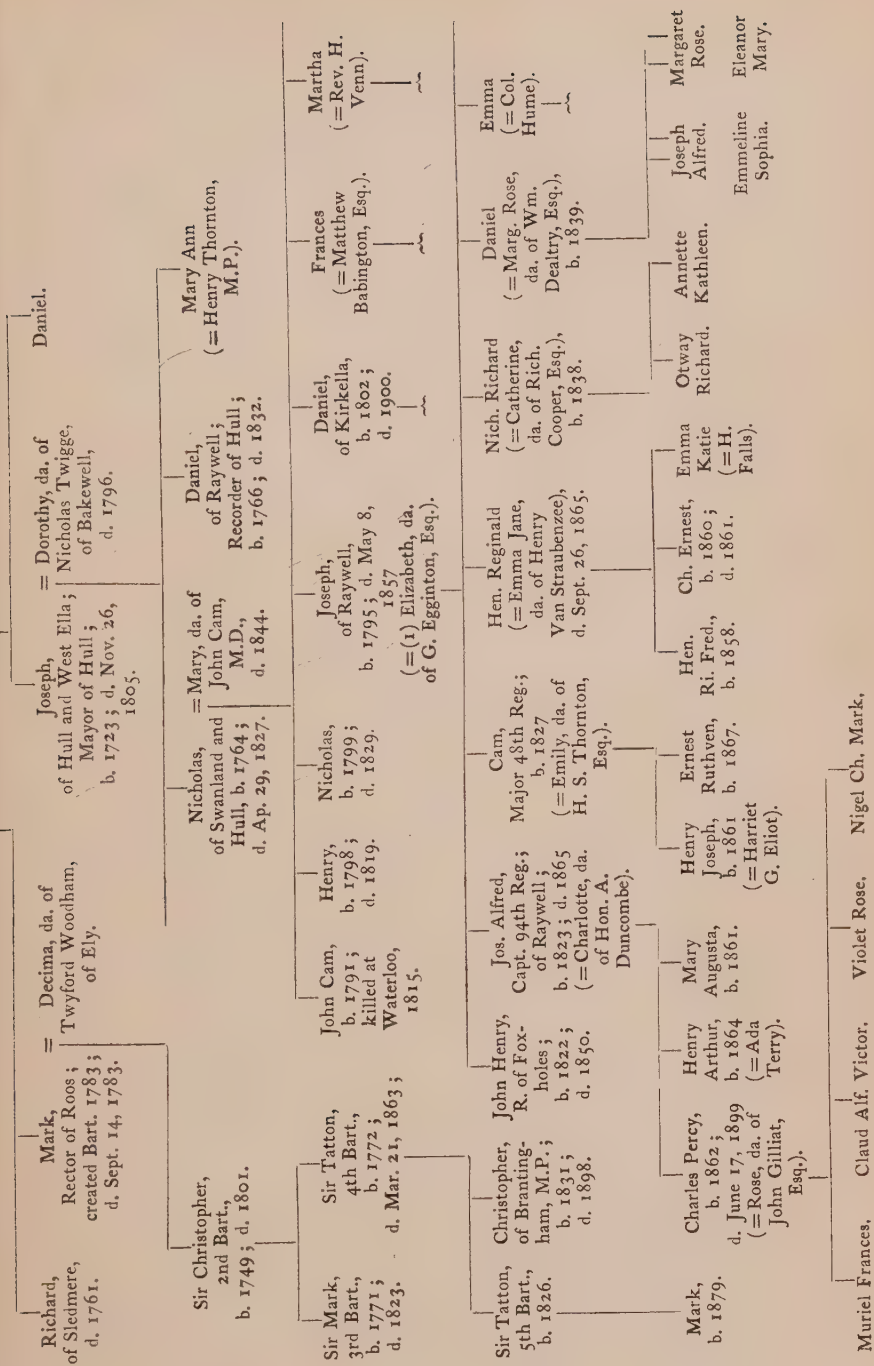
Richard, of Leeds, clothier, bur. Oct. 11, 1576.	= Sybel Reame, d. 1576.	Edmund, Romish martyr, executed 1588.
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Richard, Alderman of Leeds; Lord of the Manor, Hunslet; d. Mar. 27, 1646.	= Elizabeth Mawson, d. 1644.
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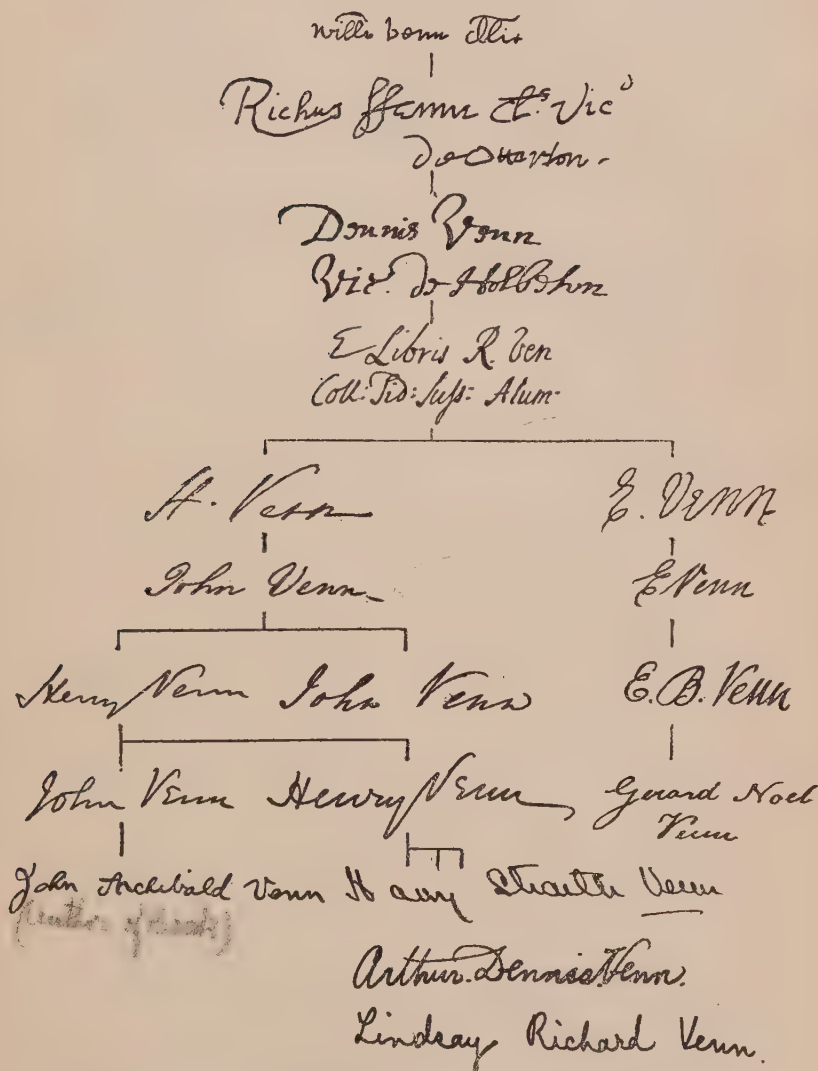
William, of Leeds, b. 1605; d. in York Castle. Will proved 1652.	= Grace, da. of Josiah Jenkinson; Quakeress; d. Sept. 26, 1685.
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Daniel, of Hull and Knottingley, b. 1632; bur. Pontefract, Sept. 4, 1697.	= Deborah, da. of Wm. Oates, Mayor of Pontefract; d. Jan. 15, 1730.
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(1) Mary, da. and co-h. of Mark Kirkby, of Sledmere.	= Richard, of Hull, merchant; b. 1678; bur. Mar. 28, 1726.	= (2) Martha, da. of Tobias Donkin.
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"VENN" SIGNATURES, 1600-1903



For the dates, etc., of these signatures of nine successive generations, see the Pedigree I. on following page.

DEVONSHIRE VENNS.—PEDIGREE I. (OUTLINE)

John Venn, = Agnes . . .
of Broadhembury,
d. 1595.
v. Ped. II.

William, = Mary . . .
1569-1621;
V. of Otterton.
v. Ped. III.

(1) Eliz. Westcott = Richard, = (2) Margaret . . .
1601-62;
V. of Otterton.

(1) Lucy Fortescue = Dennis, = (2) Patience Gay.
1648-95;
V. of Holbeton.

Richard, = Maria A. I. M. B. Ashton.
1691-1739;
R. of St. Antholin's.

Osmund Venn, = Elinor Salter.
of Peyhembury,
d. 1588.
v. Ped. IX.

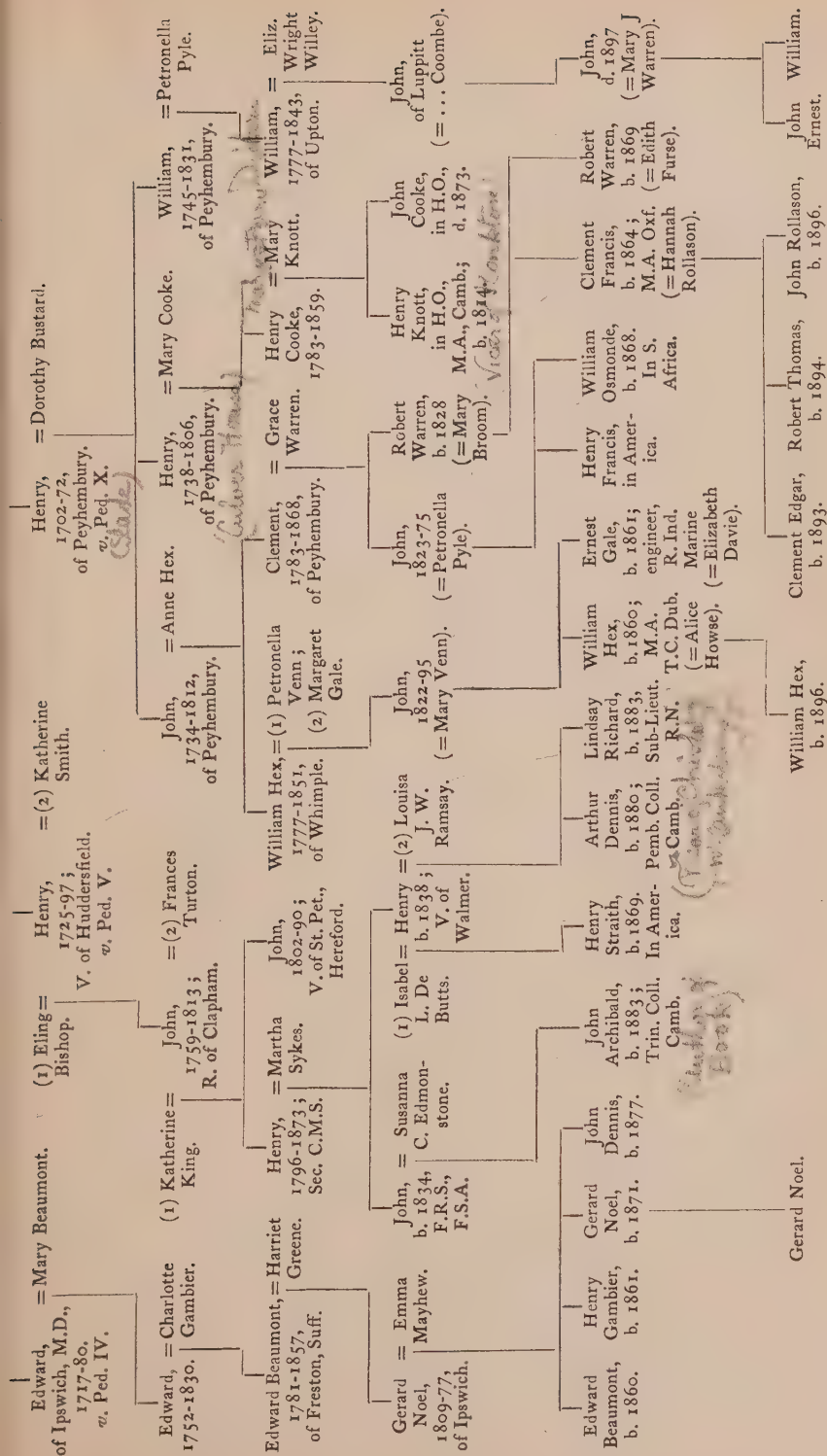
John, = Joan . . .
1568-1639,
of Peyhembury.

Henry, = Agnes Hake.
d. 1657,
of Peyhembury.

John, = Rebecca Shephard.
1629-1714,
of Peyhembury
and Plymtree.

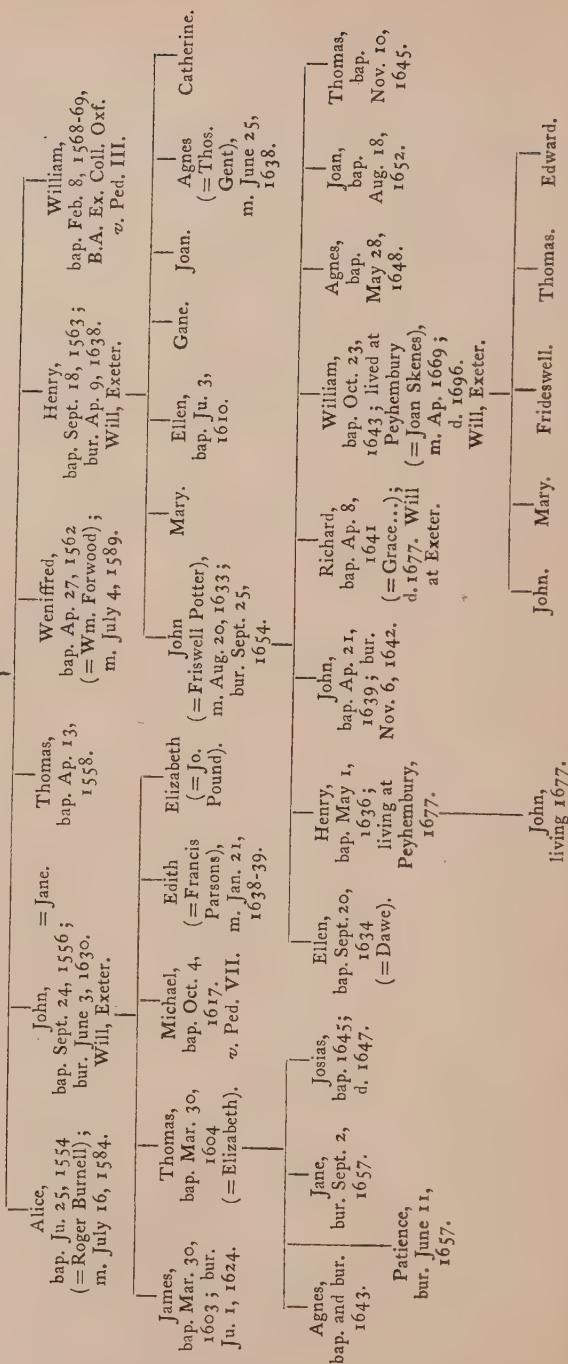
John, = Joan Harris.
1665-1732,
of Peyhembury.

[This outline Pedigree is mainly confined]
[to male issue with living descendants.]

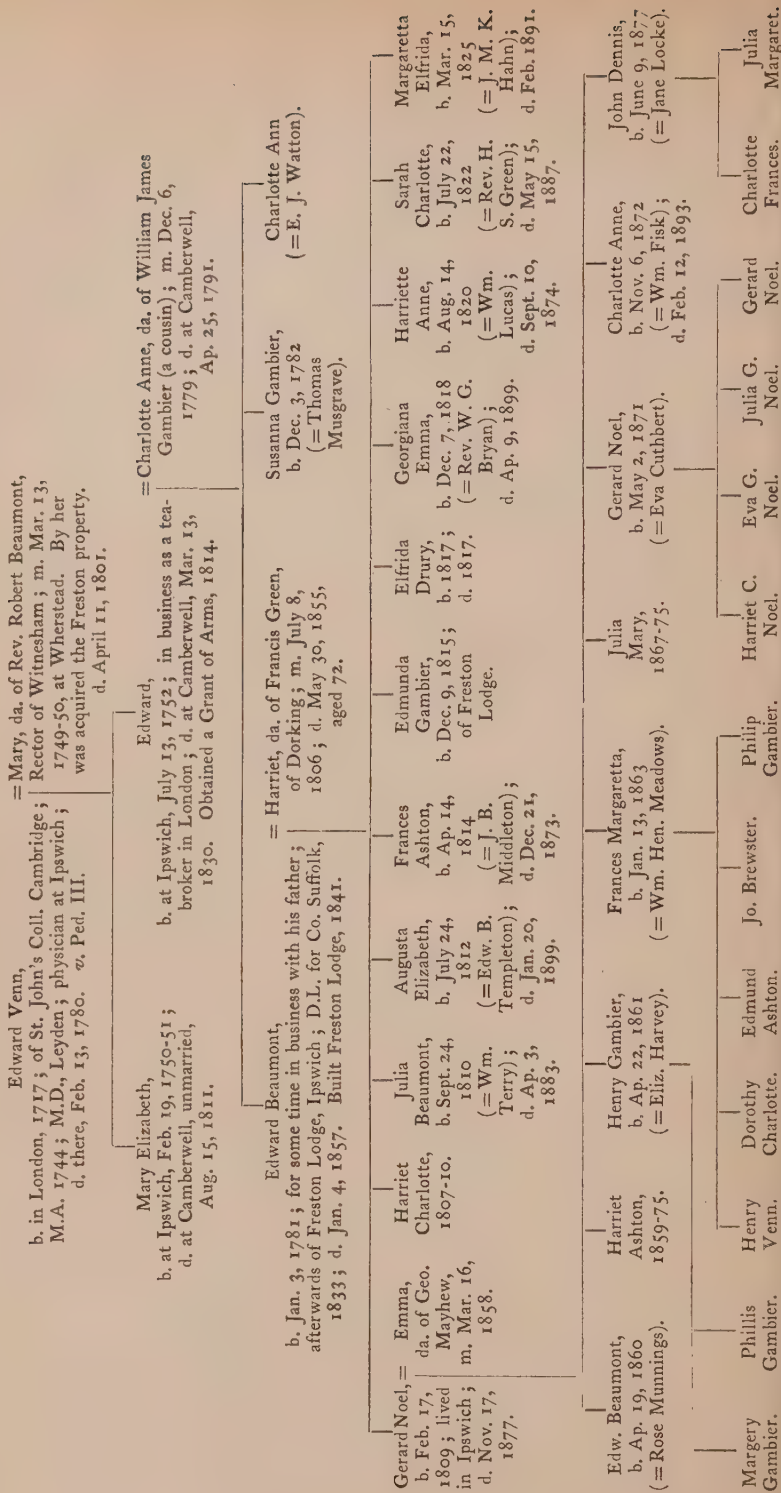


DEVONSHIRE VENNS.—PEDIGREE II. (BROADHEMBURY)

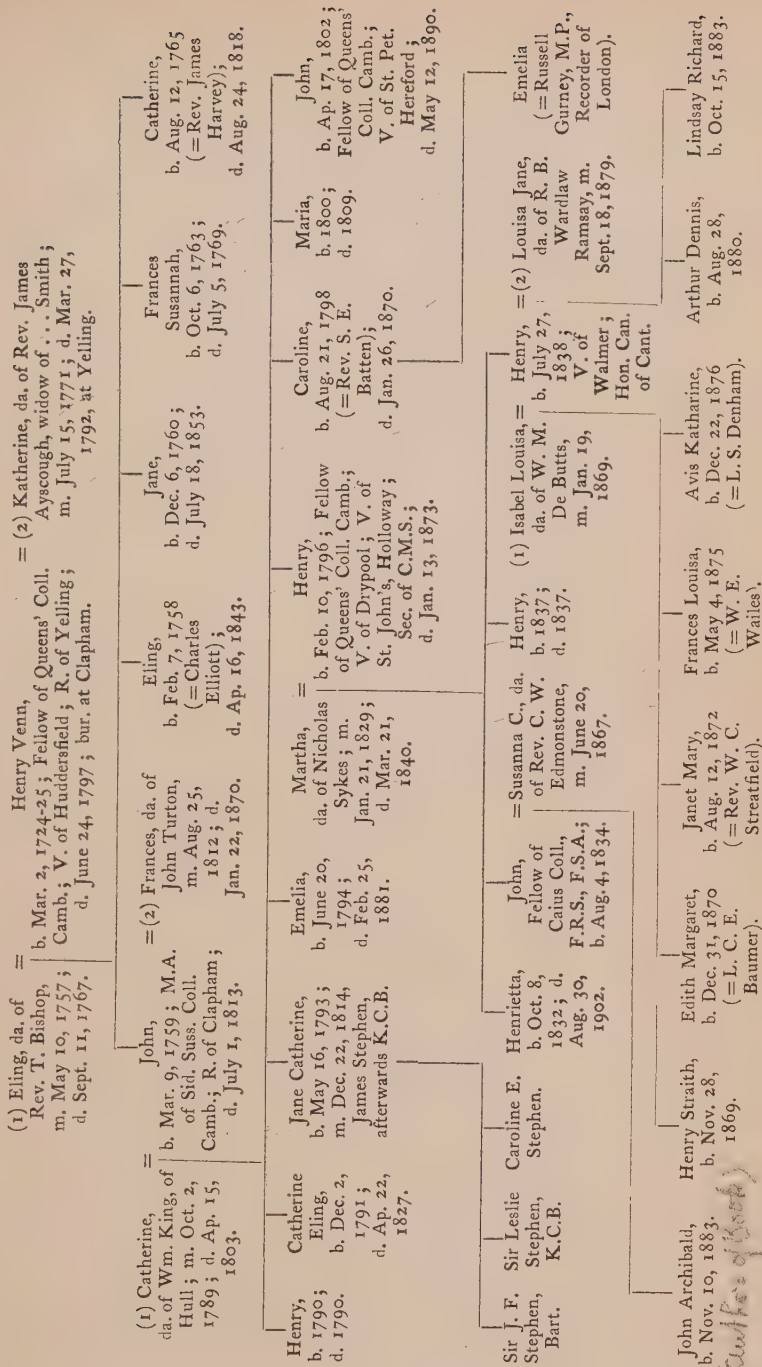
John Venn, = Agnes . . .
of Broadhembury, m. June 11, 1553.
yeoman or farmer,
bur. Feb. 1594-95.



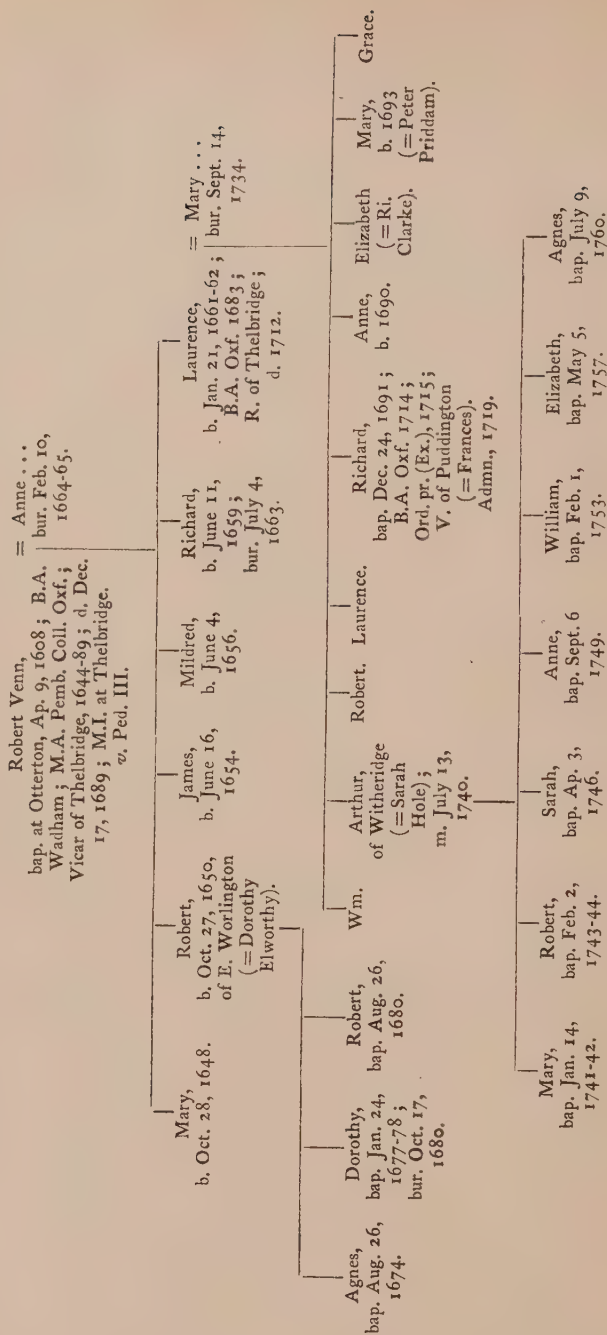
DEVONSHIRE VENNS.—PEDIGREE IV. (IPSWICH)



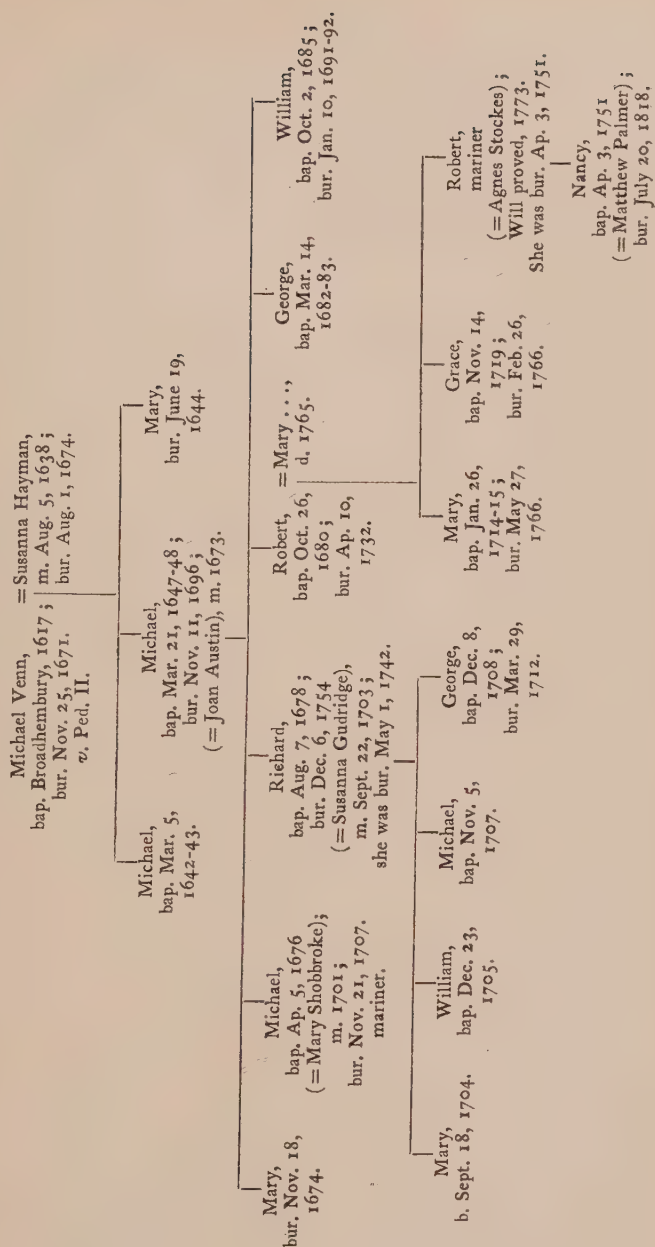
DEVONSHIRE VENNS.—PEDIGREE V. (CLAPHAM, ETC.)



DEVONSHIRE VENNS.—PEDIGREE VI. (THELBRIDGE)

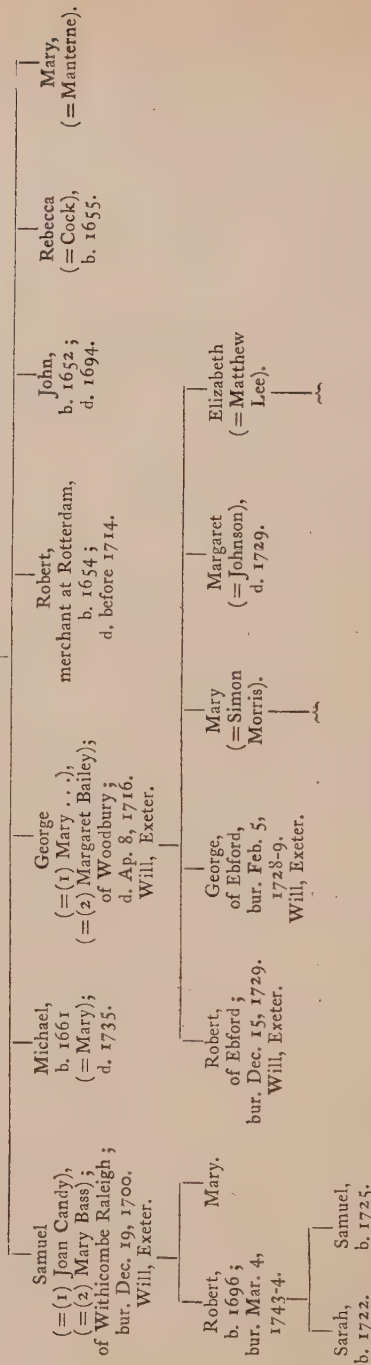


DEVONSHIRE VENNS.—PEDIGREE VII. (OTTERTON)



DEVONSHIRE VENNS.—PEDIGREE VIII. (WOODBURY)

George Venn, = Katherine . . . ,
 serge-maker ; bur. May 14,
 Will, Exeter, 1696 ; 1698.
 of Woodbury ;
 bur. Feb. 14, 1695-6.



George Venn, who heads this, probably belonged to Peyhembury. Both he and his sons seem to have acquired considerable property in and about Woodbury. There are slabs in the church to the memory of George Venn (1716), George Venn (1729), and Robert Venn (1729).

DEVONSHIRE VENNS.—PEDIGREE IX. (PEYHEMBURY)

Osmund Venn, = Elinor Salter,
yeoman, of Peyhembury. | bur. Nov. 8, 1609.
Will, Exeter, 1588.

= Joan ...

John,
b. 1568; d. 1639;
of Peyhembury.
Will, Exeter.

Henry, = Agnes
of Peyhembury. | Haake.
Will, P.C.C., 1657.

Agnes
(= Chr.
White).

Margaret
(= Hen.
Wright).

Anne
(= Jo. Pyne).

Charity
(= Wm.
Whiddon).

Francis,
d. 1614.

Henry, = Elizabeth Butt,
bap. Feb. 18, m. 1593.
1559-60. Will, 1632.

Margaret,
bap. Jan. 4, 1561-62.

George
(= Agnes), of
Cullumpton; d. 1674.

Margaret.

Henry,
b. 1608.

Ellis,
d. 1674;
of Tiverton.

John, = Rebecca Shephard,
bap. Ap. 19, 1629; d. 1687.
of Plymtree;
bur. Jan. 1714.

Mary, = Richard,
d. 1695. | of Peyhembury,
bap. Aug. 12, 1638
(= Marg. Venn).
d. Dec. 1709.

Joan. Agnes

John = Joan, da.
b. 1665; of Nich.
d. 1732; Harris.
of Peyhembury.
Will, Exeter.

William,
of Plymtree,
=(1) Ann Darby;
=(2) Mary Sandars;
bur. Plymtree, 1728.

Henry Clement,
(= Agnes
White). 1716.

Rebecca,
b. 1682.

Richard,
1683-91.

Francis,
b. 1685.

Edward,
b. 1690.

Agnes,
b. 1680.

Mary,
b. 1682.

Jane, Frances,
b. 1685. b. 1687.

Elizabeth
(= Jo.
Baker).

John, = Catherine,
bap. July 24, wid. of
1700; Nich.
ob. s.p. Jan. Harris.
22, 1774.

Henry
(= Dorothy
Bustard).
v. Ped. X.

Rebecca,
b. 1705;
d. 1730
(= Es-
cott).

Joan,
b. 1708;
d. 1733
(= Hen.
Matthew).

Petronella,
b. 1713
(= Sam.
Pyle).

Elizabeth,
b. 1718;
d. 1779
(= Jos.
Salter).

Charity,
1689-93.

Edward,
b. 1691.

Ann,
b. 1694.

Charity,
b. 1699.

Mary,
b. 1701.

John, Elisab.,
b. 1706. b. 1709.

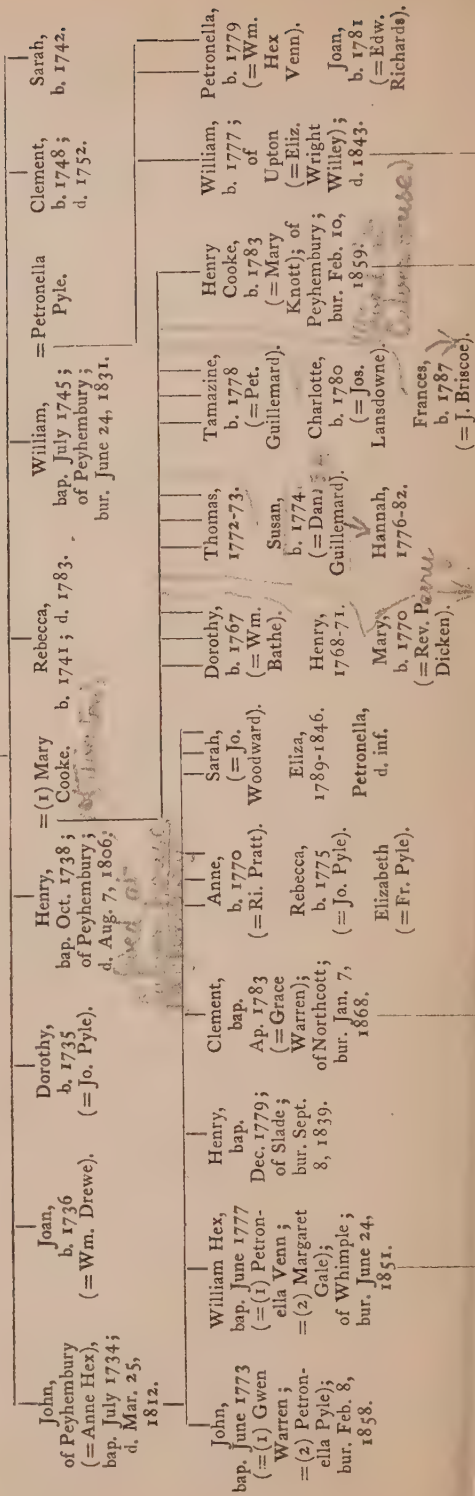
Richard,
b. 1697.

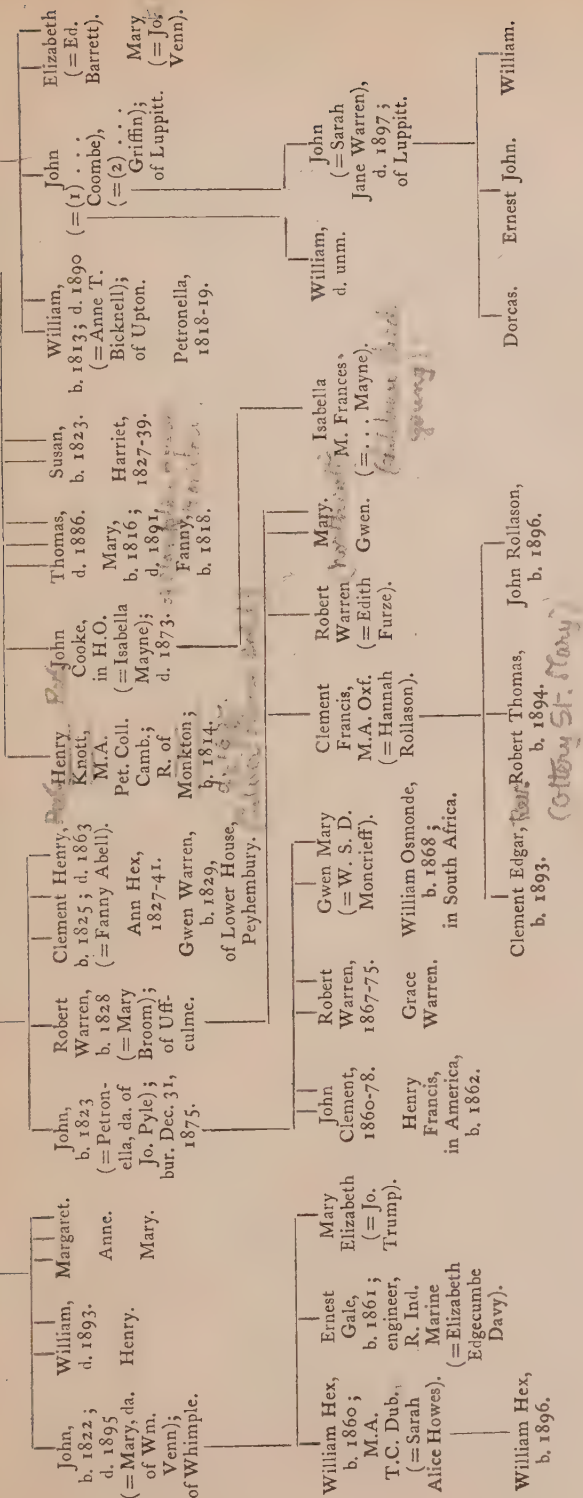
[Continued in Pedigree X.]

DEVONSHIRE VENNS.—PEDIGREE X. (PEYHEMBURY)

[Continued from Pedigree IX.]

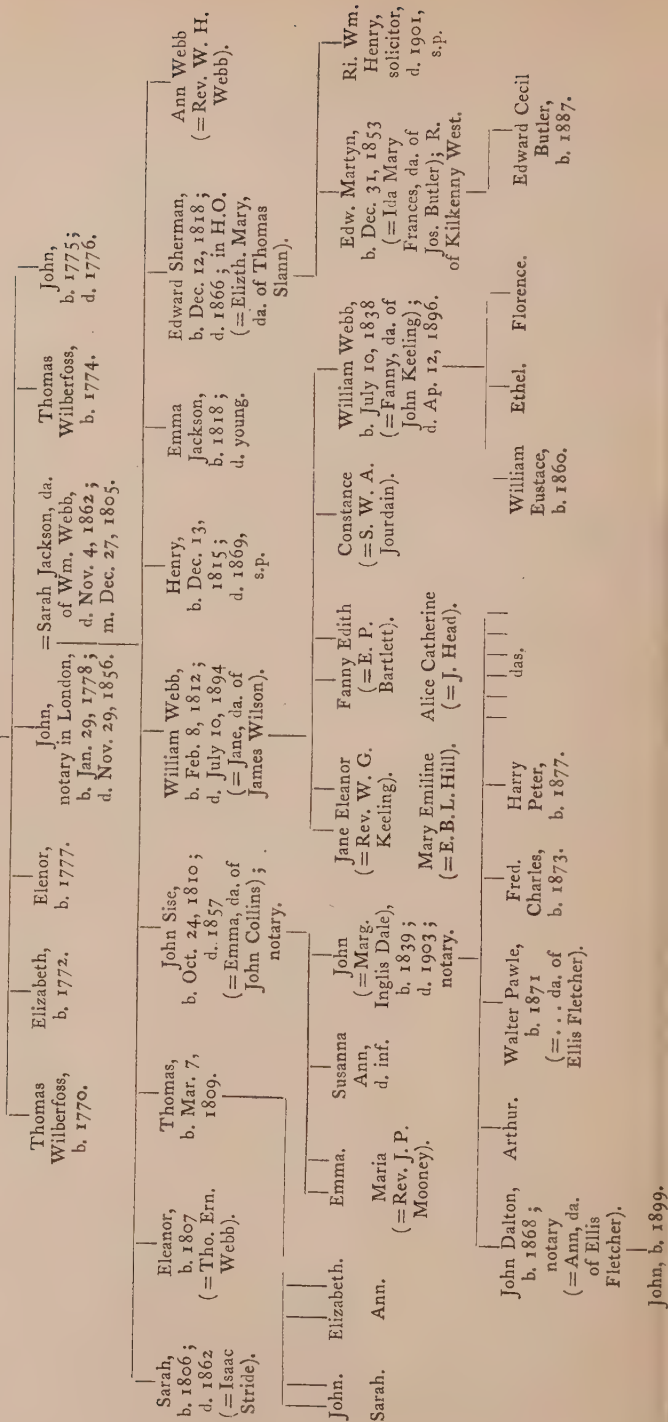
Henry Venn, = Dorothy Bustard,
bap. May 20, 1702; d. Sept. 17, 1777.
lived at Slade,
Peyhembury;
d. Dec. 15, 1772.





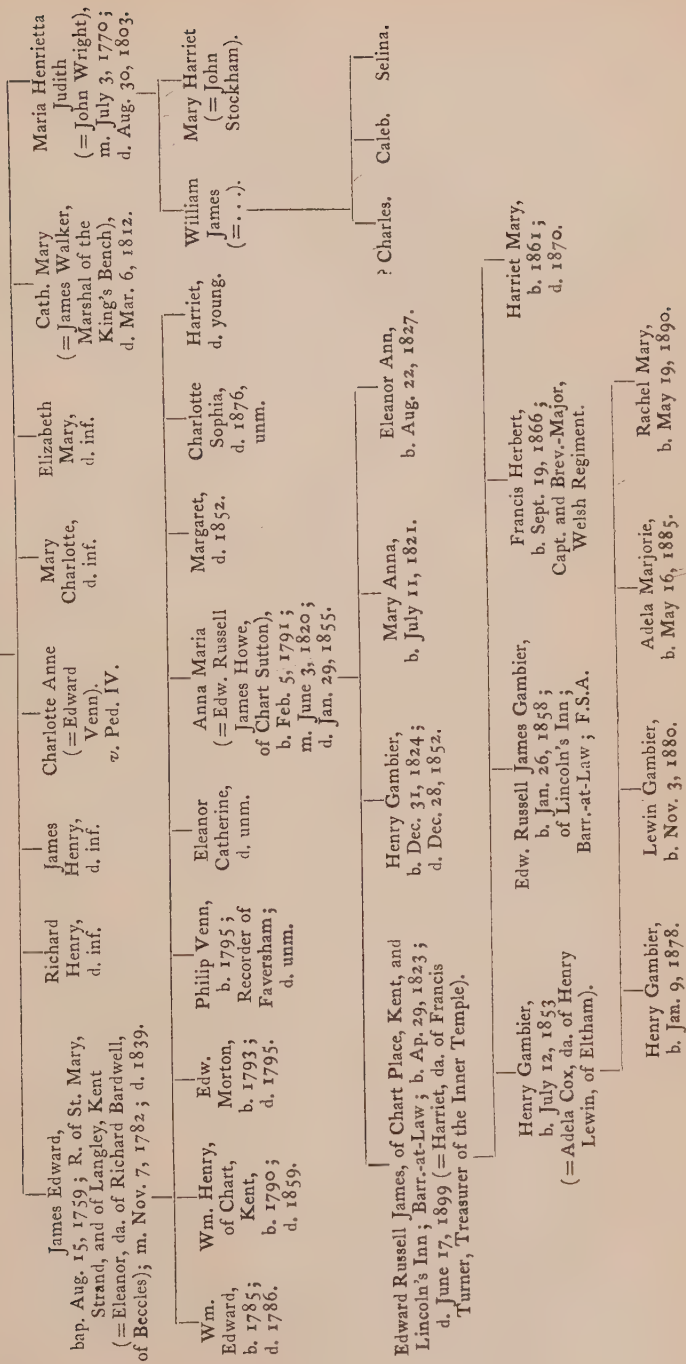
VENNS IN LONDON.

Thomas Venn, = Eleanor Furnifall,
b. Aug. 20, 1747 ; m. at St. Luke's, Middx.;
d. June 14, 1808 ; d. Mar. 13, 1822, aged 79.
bur. at All Hallows.



GAMBIER AND HOWE PEDIGREE

William James Gambier, = Mary, da. of Rev.
of Camberwell, b. Aug. 24,
Richard Venn,
m. Mar. 31, 1744;
d. Ap. 18, 1791.



IX. VENN WILLS

The following is as complete a list of wills of the name Venn, down to a recent date, so far as the registries principally containing that name are concerned, as I can make. They are inserted here, as it seems a pity that the trouble expended in compiling the list should not be available for any one else who may be interested in the same inquiry. The date is that of the Probate.

Administrations are marked with asterisk (*).

I. EXETER

(i) *Principal Registry*

*1621	William	Venn	Clerk	Ottertton
1625	Christopher	"	Husbandman	Peyhembury
1662	Richard	"	Clerk	Ottertton
*1695	Dennis	"	Clerk	Holbeton
*1701	Hugh	"	Husbandman	Stoodley
1707	Frances	"	Widow	Stoodley
1711	John	"	Yeoman	Stoodley
1712	Laurence	"	Clerk	Thelbridge
*1719	Richard	"	Clerk	Puddington
1739	Hugh	"	Yeoman	Stoodley
1747	Mary	"	Widow	W. Worlington
1759	Elizabeth	"	Spinster	S. Molton
*1785	Thomas	"		Heavitree
*1789	Matthew	"		Sandford
1812	Robert	"		Witheridge

(ii) *Archdeaconry of Exeter*

1588	Osmund	Venn		Peyhembury
1595	John	Fenne	(Will lost)	Broadhembury)
1608	Richard	Venn	(Will lost)	Peyhembury)
1609	Elinor	"	Widow	Peyhembury
1610	Oliver	"	(Lost)	Peyhembury
1614	Thomas	"		Cheriton
1617	John	"		Cullompton
*1617	Jasper	"		Exeter
1620	Elinor	"	(Lost)	Peyhembury
1621	Edward	"		Honiton
*1624	Anstice	"		Cullompton
1630	John	"	Husbandman	(Broadhembury)
*1632	Elizabeth	"	Widow	Peyhembury

1638	Henry	Venn	Husbandman	Broadhembury
1639	John	"	Carpenter	Peyhembury
1642	Margaret	"	Widow	Exeter
1661	Charity	"	Widow	Peyhembury
*1663	Thomas	"		Broadhembury
1665	Amias	"	Cob-mason	Bradninch
1666	Margaret	"	Widow	Ottertton
*1669	Thomas	"		Cullompton
1670	John	"		Peyhembury
1674	Ellis	"	Husbandman	Tiverton
1674	George	"	"	Cullompton
1675	Henry	"	"	Peyhembury
1676	Richard	"	"	"
1677	Jasper	"	"	"
1680	George	"	"	Cullompton
1684	John	"		Exeter
1685	Thomas	"	Yeoman	Tiverton
1689	Dorothy	"	Widow	Peyhembury
*1689	John	"		"
1696	William	"	Husbandman	"
1698	Edward	"		"
1701	Samuel	"	Mariner	Withycombe Raleigh
*1707	Henry	"	Wool-comber	Cullompton
1710	Richard	"	Yeoman	Peyhembury
1717	Mary	"	Widow	"
1720	John	"	Yeoman	"
*1725	Elias	"		Tiverton
1727	Elias	"	Serge-maker	"
1729	Mary	"	Widow	"
*1730	William	"		Peyhembury
*1732	Robert	"		Ottertton
1733	John	"	Yeoman	Peyhembury
*1733	Elias	"	Serge-maker	Tiverton
1736	John	"	Yeoman	Halberton
*1738	John	"	"	Silverton
1740	Edward	"	"	Peyhembury
*1751	Ann	"	Widow	Ottertton
1768	Laurence	"		Exeter
1772	Henry	"	Gent.	Peyhembury
1773	Robert	"	Mariner	(Ottertton)
1777	Dorothy	"	Widow	Peyhembury
1781	Edward	"		Halberton
1783	John	"	Gent.	Peyhembury
1786	Catherine	"		Honiton
*1794	Richard	"	Yeoman	Peyhembury
1795	Richard	"	Yeoman	"

1800	Sarah Venn	Widow	Peyhembury
1807	Henry	"	"
1812	John	"	"
1821	Joan	"	Honiton
1831	William	"	Peyhembury
1832	John	"	Cullompton
1832	Thomas	"	Tiverton
*1832	Thomas	"	"
1837	Agnes	"	Exeter
1840	Henry	"	Peyhembury
*1843	William	"	"
1844	Saria	"	Tiverton
*1846	Eliza	"	Cullompton
1851	William Hex Venn		Whimple

(iii) *Dean and Chapter of Exeter*

1744	Samuel Venn	Comber	Colyton
1750	William	Excise Officer	Clyst Honiton
1760	George	Maltster	Heavitree
1761	Elizabeth	Widow	"
1775	Margaret	"	Clyst Honiton

(iv) *Consistorial Court of the Bishop*

1606	Richard Venn	Weaver	Crediton
1677	Thomas	"	Burdocke
*1704	Michael	Ship-carpenter	W. Teignmouth
*1705	William	Husbandman	Morchard Bishop
1730	William	Cordwainer	Crediton
*1741	Joseph	Cordwainer	"
*1747	Elizabeth	Spinster	"
1774	William	"	Morchard Bishop

(v) *Vicars Choral, Peculiar Court*

*1694	John Venn		Woodbury
1696	George	Serge-maker	"
*1698	Katharine	"	"
1716	George	"	"
1730	Robert	Gent.	"
1729	George	"	"
1738	Margaret	Widow	"

(vi) *Archdeaconry of Barnstaple*

1643	Robert Venn		Coleridge
1673	John	Husbandman	E. Anstey
1715	Robert	Yeoman	E. Worlington

*1721	Nicholas	Venn		Stoodley
1734	Thomas	"	Yeoman	"
1737	Sarah	"	Wife of Robert	S. Molton
*1738	Robert	"	Husbandman	Witheridge
*1740	Richard	"		Wembworthy
*1747	Robert	"	Yeoman	Witheridge
*1758	Robert	"		S. Molton
1789	Henry	"	Yeoman	Chulmleigh
*1793	Christian	"	Spinster	W. Worlington
1808	Henry	"		Chulmleigh
1820	James	"		Lit. Torrington
1824	Ann	"		"
1825	William	"		S. Molton

(vii) *Archdeaconry of Totnes*

*1712	Patience	Venn	Widow	Holbeton
*1796	Sarah	"		Dartmouth
*1806	Elizabeth	"		"

II. PREROGATIVE COURT OF CANTERBURY

1559	William	Venn	Yeoman	Lyd. Laurence, Som.
1576	John	Fenne	Merch. Taylor	London
1581	Thomas	Venn	Haberdasher	Cirencester, Gloucs.
1588	John	"	Yeoman	Cheddar, Som.
1591	John	"	Draper	Lyd. Laurence, Som.
1595	Margerie	"	Widow	"
1606	Robert	"	"Gonner"	London
1611	Hugh	"	Clothier	Wotton under Edge, Gloucs.
1617	William	"	"	"
1629	William	"	"	"
1629	John	"	Yeoman	"
1639	William	"		Of Bantam
1639	Sir Richard	Fenn	Alderman	London
1641	Simon	Venn	Yeoman	Lyd. Laurence, Som.
1641	Henry	"	Schoolmaster	Cuckfield, Sussex
*1647	Thomas	"		Stogumber, Som.
*1647	Nicholas	"		Stogursey, Som.
1647	Lady Jane	Fenn	Widow	London
1650	John	Venn	M.P. ; Silkman	London
*1650	Martin	"		Kings Brompton, Som.
1653	Thomas	"	Yeoman	Hawkesbury, Gloucs.
1654	Mary	"	Widow	Wotton under Edge, Gloucs.

1655	Anne Venn	Spinster	Brompton, London
1656	John "	Yeoman	Hempstead, Gloucs.
1657	Henry "	Husbandman	Kings Brompton, Som.
1657	Henry "	Yeoman	Peyhembury, Devon.
1657	John "	"	Staverton, Devon.
1665	John "	"	Kings Brompton, Som.
1667	Catherine Venn	Widow	Hawkesbury, Gloucs.
1667	William "	Yeoman	Kings Brompton, Som.
*1677	Robert "	Mariner	"Stepney "
*1677	Thomas "	"	Lyd. Laurence, Som.
*1678	Richard "	"	Newington, Surrey
1683	William "	"	Hawkesbury, Gloucs.
1683	Thomas "	Gent.	Wotton under Edge, Gloucs.
1688	John "	Dr. of Divinity	Oxford
*1691	George "	"	Gloucs.
1691	John "	Mariner	<i>In part. transmarinis</i>
*1704	Thomas "	"	"
1709	John "	"	"
1713	Ambrose "	"	"
*1713	Edward "	"	St. Marg., West- minster
1723	Catherine "	Widow	Oxford
1734	Joseph "	"	Mitchel Dean, Gloucs.
*1735	Edward "	"	Kent
*1739	Richard "	Clerk	St. Antholin's, Lon- don
*1745	William "	"	Carshalton, Surrey
1756	Joseph "	Mariner	H.M.S. <i>Lowestoff</i>
1762	Mary M. A. J. B. Venn	Widow	London
1762	Charles Venn	Mayor of	Barnstaple, Devon
1763	Stephen "	Merchant	London
1764	John "	Clerk	Jamaica
1765	Isaac "	Mariner	<i>In part. transmarinis</i>
1770	Elizabeth "	Widow	Jamaica
*1776	Catherine "	"	St. Leon., Shoreditch
1780	Edward "	Dr. of Physic	Ipswich
1780	Edward "	Cowkeeper	Middlesex
1786	Richard "	Baker	St. Leon., Shoreditch
1791	Richard "	Gent.	Yelling, Hunts.
1792	Catherine "	"	"

*1796	Arthur	Venn	Gloucs.
1797	Edward	„ Yeoman	Stoke, Surrey
1797	Henry	„ Clerk	Clapham
1800	Elizabeth	„	Halberton, Devon
1802	Hannah	„ Spinster	Lyd. Laurence, Som.
1805	Benjamin	„ Mariner	<i>In part. transmarinis</i>
1808	Thomas	„	London
*1809	Elizabeth	„	Devon
*1809	Elizabeth	„	Middlesex
1809	Thomas	„	„
1811	Mary	„	Surrey

III. TAUNTON REGISTRY. ARCHDEACONRY COURT

1541	Alson Fenne	Widow	Lyd. Laurence
1582	Simon Venne	Yeoman	„
1597	Agnes Venn	(lost)	„
? 1597	William	„ (lost)	? Spaxton
1610	John	„ Yeoman	Lyd. Laurence
1610	Thomas	„	Upton
1612	Richard	„ (lost)	Kings Brompton
1614	Peter	„ (lost)	Upton
1617	John, als. Stone	„ (lost)	Chipstable
1617	Robert Venn	„ (lost)	Kings Brompton
1618	Joan	„ (lost)	Upton
1620	Thomas	„	Kilve
1624	William	„ Husbandman	Kings Brompton
1624	Margery	„ Widow	„
1626	Maud	„ „	Lyd. Laurence
1632	Elizabeth	„ „	„
1634	John	„	Clatworthy
1637	Cicely	„ Widow	Kilve
1637	Ebbot	„ „	Taunton, St. Jas.
1637	Robert	„ (lost)	Stogumber
1639	Richard	„	Stogumber
1640	John	„	Kings Brompton
1666	Thomas	„ Yeoman	Upton
1667	William	„ Husbandman	Wythiell
1668	Thomas	„ „	Kings Brompton
1674	Alice	„ (lost)	Upton
1675	Elizabeth	„ Spinster	Skilgate
1683	Simon	„ Yeoman	Lyd. Laurence
*1690	Patience	„ (lost)	Kings Brompton
1692	John	„ Husbandman	Lyd. Laurence
*1694	Gregory	„ (lost)	Kings Brompton
1695	Jane	„ Widow	Lyd. Laurence

1696	Martin	Venn	Kings Brompton
1697	Simon	"	Hilfarrence
1698	George (Vaine)		Taunton, St. Jas.
1699	Radigund Venn	"	Kings Brompton
*1700	Susan	" (alias Watts)	N. Petherton
1703	Elizabeth	" Widow	Wythiell
1704	William	" Husbandman	Wythiell
1712	Mary (Vaine)		Taunton, St. Jas.
1714	William Venn	(alias Hookins)	Milverton
*1717	Elizabeth	"	Lyd. Laurence
1727	Robert	" Mason	N. Petherton
1728	Nicholas	" Yeoman	Wythiell
*1730	Agnes	" (lost)	Stogumber
1734	Alice	" Spinster	Kings Brompton
1739	Ann	" Widow	N. Petherton
1739	Joan	" "	Porlock
*1742	Robert	"	Stogursey
1744	Edward	" (alias Hookins)	Milverton
1747	Thomas	" Yeoman	Combe Flory
1751	Thomas	" Butcher	Lyd. Laurence
1762	Robert	" Gent.	Wythiell
1764	William	" Yeoman	N. Petherton
*1764	William	" Mason	Wythiell
*1766	Edmund	"	Brushford
*1777	William	" Yeoman	Wythiell
1781	Robert	" "	Kings Brompton
1786	Richard	" Husbandman	Lyd. Laurence
*1800	William	"	Stogursey
*1807	Robert	"	Huish Champflower
1808	William	"	Upton
1819	Thomas	"	Nettlecombe
*1848	James	"	Chipstable
1851	Mary Jane	"	Pitminster

WELLS REGISTRY

General Calendar of all Courts (before 1660)

1620 Thomas Venn Husbandman Brompton Regis

Bishop's Court

1665 Agnes Venn Chipstable
 *1693 John Fenn Kelston
 *1726 John Ven East Brent

*1729	Robert Venn	Stogumber
1732	Thomas "	"
1755	Joseph "	Stanton Drew

Archdeaconry of Wells

1663	William Venn	Burnham
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Peculiar Court (St. Decumans)

1726	Benjamin Ven	
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Dean's Court

1706	Thomas Venn	Wedmore
1728	William "	"
1737	William "	"
1744	Thomas "	Allerton
1761	John "	Wedmore
1770	William "	Mark
1775	Betty "	Wedmore

The following wills were noted by me some years ago, but do not appear to be recorded in the Calendars :—

1570	John Fenne	Wells
1580	Thomas Venn	Tolland
1639	John "	Cheddar

GLOUCESTER.

The Calendar of the wills at Gloucester (1541-1650) has been published in the Index Library, vol. 12.

X. FAMILY PORTRAITS

Family portraits are so apt to lose nearly all their value, through loss of their identification, that I have thought it well to give a list here of all those the existence of which I can verify. Except where otherwise stated, they are in my possession.

HENRY VENN, 1725-97.

1. Large oil-painting ; $\frac{1}{2}$ length. In cassock, gown, bands, and wig. Painted by Mason Chamberlain, R.A. 1770. *Æt.* 45.

Given in 1834, to my father, by Miss Riland, daughter of H. Venn's old friend and curate, John Riland. Engraved by J. A. Dean, 1834, for the *Life*.

2. There is another portrait, closely resembling the above, in possession of Miss Venn of Freston. Engraved by G. Adcock.

3. A miniature in possession of Miss Howe (*v.* Gambier Pedigree).

JOHN VENN, 1759-1813.

1. Water-colour, oval; $\frac{1}{2}$ length; about 10 × 6 in. Profile; dressed for College hall, hair powdered. Taken at Cambridge in 1781. *Æt.* 22. By John Downman, A.R.A.

2. Water-colour; $\frac{1}{2}$ length; about 10 × 6 in. In gown and bands. *Æt.* about 54. By J. W. Slater. (Signed and dated 1814. As Mr. Venn died in 1813, this picture—if the date be correct—was probably a copy of a former one.)

Engraved by E. Scriven.

HENRY VENN, 1796-1873.

1. Pencil-sketch; miniature; about 3 × 2 in. In profile. *Æt.* about 12. Probably done by his sister Catherine Eling.

2. Pencil-sketch; $\frac{1}{4}$ length; about 6 × 5 in. Taken in 1820, by J. W. Slater. *Æt.* 24.

3. Water-colour; $\frac{1}{2}$ length; about 12 × 8 in. Taken in 1831. *Æt.* 35. By G. Richmond, R.A.

4. Oil-portrait; $\frac{3}{4}$ length. Painted for the C.M.S. Committee-room in 1862. *Æt.* 66. By G. Richmond, R.A. Now at Salisbury Square. Engraved by Henry Cousins.

5. Crayon-sketch, by G. Richmond. Study of the head for the above portrait. In possession of Rev. H. Venn, Walmer.

MARTHA VENN, 1800-40.

Oil-painting, by H. W. Pickersgill, R.A.; $\frac{3}{4}$ length. Evening dress; sitting on sofa. 1829. *Æt.* 29.

JOHN VENN, 1802-90.

Small water-colour; $\frac{1}{2}$ length. In green-gray coat. *Æt.* 18. By J. W. Slater, 1820.

JANE VENN, 1760-1852.

Miniature; $\frac{1}{2}$ length. Dark blue dress and turban. *Æt.* 67. Taken in 1827, by Miss Reynolds.

ELING ELLIOTT (*née* VENN), 1758–1843.

Pastel, by John Russell, R.A. About 1785. In possession of Sir Charles A. Elliott. (The artist's sketch, a study for this, is in possession of Dr. Forshall, 12 Southwood Lane, Highgate.)

Pencil-sketch by J. W. Slater. One of a family group, about 1825. In possession of E. A. Elliott, 41 Holland Park, W.

GROUP OF PENCIL-SKETCHES BY J. W. SLATER.

1. Caroline Venn (Mrs. S. E. Batten). *Æt.* 22.
2. Emelia Venn. *Æt.* 26.
3. Catharine Eling Venn. *Æt.* 29.
4. Jane Catherine Venn (Lady Stephen). *Æt.* 27.
5. Mrs. John Venn (*née* Frances Turton).
6. Jane Venn. *Æt.* 60.

These sketches were done for my uncle, John Venn, for him to take to India, in 1820. There were also, in the same set, likenesses of Mrs. Dicey (*née* Anne Mary Stephen), and Rev. S. E. Batten. They were the gift of James and Jane Stephen.

JOHN VENN, Sc.D., b. 1834.

1. Miniature ; $\frac{1}{2}$ length. By Miss E. J. Rosenberg, 1890.
2. Oil-painting ; $\frac{2}{3}$ length. By C. Brock. In the Hall of Caius College. 1899.
3. Crayon-portrait ; $\frac{1}{4}$ length. By E. Clifford, 1899.
4. Photogravure for title-page of College Biographical History.

THOMAS BISHOP, D.D., 1681–1737.

Miniature ; in sepia ; about 3×2 in. In gown, cassock, bands, and wig. $\frac{1}{2}$ length. *Circa* 1730. *Æt.* 50. Given to me, 1885, by his gr.-gr.-grandson, my cousin, J. H. Brasier.

GEORGE KING, 1763–1830.

1. Pastel ; in oval frame. $\frac{3}{4}$ length. Youth, about 13. In blue coat, with book of music at his side. On the picture is written "G. E. pinxit, 1776" (probably George Engleheart).
2. Pastel ; with oval border. *Æt.* about 15. $\frac{3}{4}$ length. Companion picture to No. 2 of Catharine King.

KATHARINE KING (Mrs. JOHN VENN), 1760-1803.

1. Oil-painting, of a pretty little child. Originally full-length, holding up her dress, dancing. Unfortunately cut down to $\frac{1}{2}$ length.

2. Pastel; with oval border. $\frac{3}{4}$ length. *Æt.* about 15. Companion to No. 2 above.

The three pastels above seem plainly by the same artist. They doubtless came to my father on the death of his uncle, George King, in 1830.

EMELIA BATTEN (Mrs. RUSSELL GURNEY), 1823-96.

Water-colour; $\frac{1}{2}$ length. By Negelen, about 1842.

FLORENCE BATTEN, 1825-43.

1. Water-colour; $\frac{1}{2}$ length. By Negelen, about 1842.

2. Water-colour; $\frac{1}{3}$ length; somewhat similar to above.

JOHN CAM, 1699-1769.

In blue coat, white cravat, and long wig. $\frac{1}{2}$ length. Miniature, 4×3 in.

(Given to me by my cousin, T. H. Babington, 1885. At the back is written, by my aunt Mary Anne Sykes, "my mother's grandfather.")

SUSANNA CARNEGIE VENN (*née* EDMONSTONE).

Miniature, from photograph, about 1886. By Miss E. J. Rosenberg.

JOHN ARCHIBALD VENN, b. 1883.

1. Chalk; life-size. By Miss E. J. Rosenberg, 1885.

2. Miniature, from photograph, by Miss Wheelwright, 1899.

3. Oil; $\frac{3}{4}$ length. 1893. *Æt.* 10. By Miss Wale.

Of the Ipswich Venns there are the three following at Freston Lodge:—

EDWARD VENN, 1752-1830.

A good picture, representing a man of about 50; frilled shirt; looking to the right.

There is a somewhat similar likeness in water-colours.

EDWARD BEAUMONT VENN, 1781-1857.

Æt. about 40 ; black hair ; white cravat and waistcoat ; looking nearly straight forward.

GERARD NOEL VENN, 1809-77.

Oil-painting, from a photograph. Gray beard and moustache.

In possession of Miss Howe :—

MARY (VENN) GAMBIER, 1721-1791.

Miniature, in black oval frame, representing a lady about 40, in a large white satin headdress.

Corresponding miniature of her husband, William James Gambier, in a mauve coat and green waistcoat ; powdered hair.

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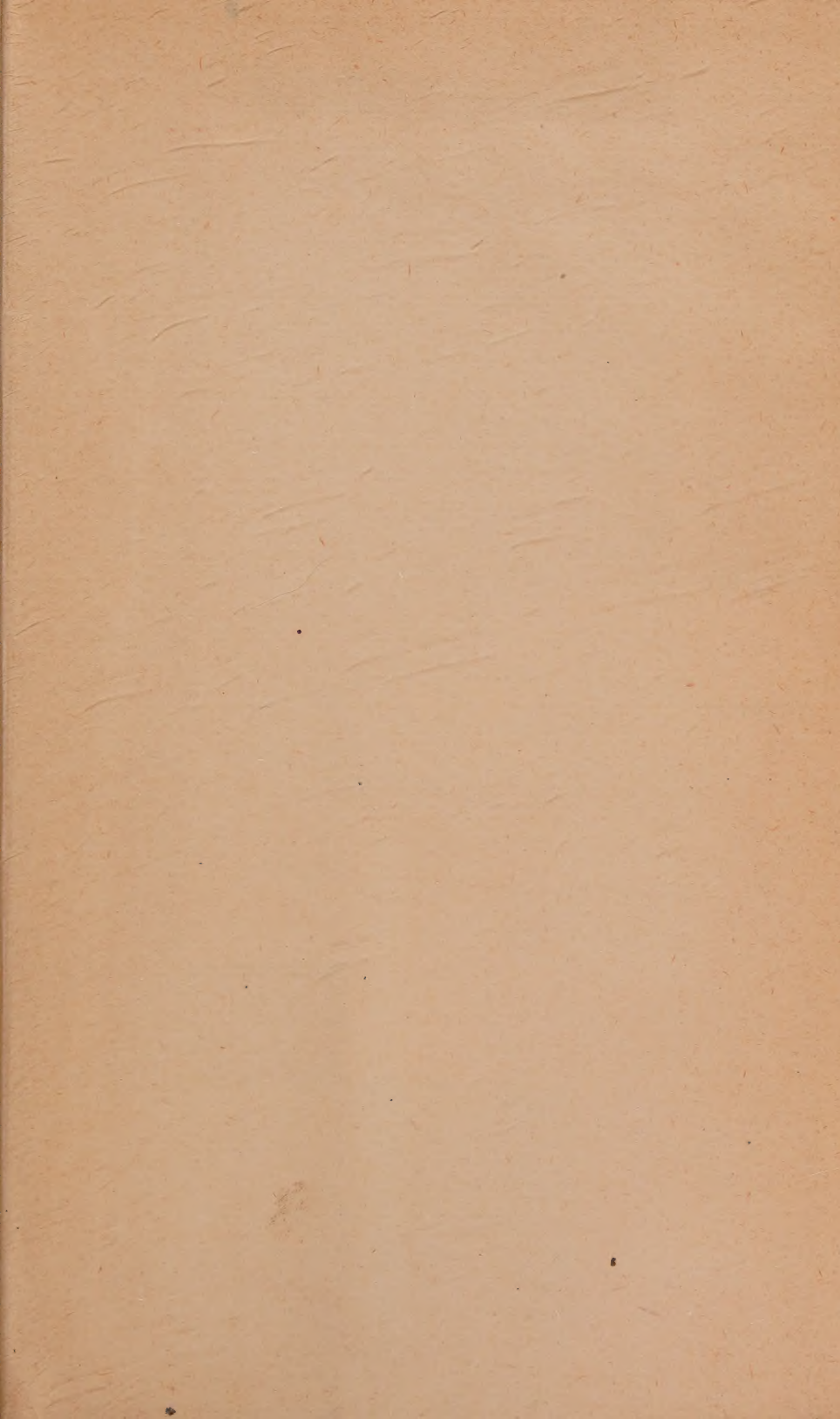
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DR. JOHN VENN.

The death has occurred at Cambridge of Dr. John Venn, Senior Fellow of Gonville and Caius College, of which he had been President since 1903. Dr. Venn came of a long line of distinguished scholars. His great-grandfather was the well known English Evangelical divine and the author of "The Compleat Duty of Man." His grandfather was one of the founders of the Church Missionary Society, and his father was honorary secretary of that society for more than thirty years. Dr. Venn was born at Hull in 1834. He was educated at Highgate Grammar School and the Islington Proprietary School, and afterwards at Caius, where he graduated in 1857 and obtained a Fellowship in the same year. Dr. Venn took Orders in 1858, and for some years held curacies at Cheshunt and Mortlake, but subsequently gave up clerical work. He was Lecturer in Logic and Moral Sciences at Caius College and an examiner in those subjects in the University, and was Hulsean Lecturer in 1869. Dr. Venn took his D.Sc. degree in 1884, a year after being elected a Fellow of the Royal Society. He was also a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, and edited for the Cambridge Antiquarian Society the Register of Baptisms in St. Michael's Parish Church between the years 1588 and 1837. Dr. Venn was also the author of "Logic of Chance," "Symbolic Logic," and "Empirical Logic," and also published the "Annals of the Venn Family" and various papers in scientific and other periodicals.

Dr. Venn
the eldest
Edmonston

